

Title: **MARK — *Christ the Servant***
Text: Mark 10:45
Date: Tuesday Evening—February 17, 2004
Tape # Y-4a
Readings: *Bob Pruitt and Bobbie Estes*
Introduction:

The words of our Savior in Mark 10:45 give us a clear summary of Mark's Gospel. Remember, Mark's object is to present our Savior in his character as Jehovah's righteous Servant; and that is exactly how our Lord describes himself. — "*For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*"

DISTINCT PURPOSE

Each of the four gospel narratives are distinct. Each one presents our Savior in a specific character. **It is a mistake to read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as four biographies of the Lord Jesus. They are not biographies at all. They are biographical character sketches. Each is intended to be different from the other. Each presents our Savior from a distinct different point of view.** The four Gospels give us four distinct views of our Lord and of his work.

The Gospel of Matthew is written to present Christ as the King. The Gospel of Mark presents his character as Jehovah's Servant. The Gospel of Luke presents him as

the Son of man. The Gospel of John presents him as the Son of God.

NO GENEALOGY

Have you ever wondered why there is no record of our Lord's ascension in Matthew and John, and why there is no record of his genealogy in Mark? Luke gives his own record of our Lord's genealogy as a man; but John gives us neither a record of his genealogy or his ascension. Why? The answer is obvious when you remember the distinct purpose of each.

Matthew presents Christ as the King and Luke presents him as the man promised in the Old Testament. In both cases, a genealogical record is needed. Because Christ is the King from eternity, a record of his ascension in Matthew's case would be redundant. **John presents the Savior as the incarnate God,** that One who is immutably God over all and blessed forever. In his case, a record of our Lord's genealogy or his ascension would be contrary to his purpose. **Mark only mentions the ascension,** because his intent is to show us that as Jehovah's Servant, our Savior's mission is complete, successful, and accepted by the Father. Having finished his work, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High (Heb. 1:1-3; 10:10-14).

(Heb 1:1-3) "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the

prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

(Heb 10:10-14) “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. (11) And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: (12) But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. (14) For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

CHRIST THE SERVANT

Mark’s Gospel narrative is “a joyful account of the ministry, miracles, actions, and sufferings of Christ” (*John Gill*). It is all about the obedience of our Savior to the will of God. He tells us nothing about the birth and early life of our Lord. He gives us very few details about our Master’s sermons. Yet he gives greater details than others about his miracles. Mark’s is the shortest of the four Gospels. Yet it is not in any way less significant. Mark used greater brevity than the others; but his narrative is just as important. Those who suggest that Mark simply copied down some facts from Matthew, or

that he wrote what Peter told him to write both miss the purpose of Mark's work and undermine the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture. Without question, he got information from those men who taught him the gospel; but he wrote by divine inspiration.

J.C. Ryle very properly observed that Mark's Gospel is "The independent narrative of an independent witness, who was inspired to write a history of our Lord's *works*, rather than of his *words*...Like all the rest of Scripture, every word of St. Mark is '*given by inspiration of God*,' and every word is '*profitable*.'"

MARK HIMSELF

Let me tell you about the man God used to give us this inspired narrative of our Savior's obedience as our Representative, as the One who worked out righteousness for us. — He a man like us, not always dependable, a sinner saved by grace, just like we are.

In other places he is called John Mark. He was the man who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey and proved himself at that time an unfaithful servant. He could not take the pressure of the work: the constant opposition, the thankless labor, and the relentless long, lonely hours. So he ran back home to momma. But this is not the only time we see Mark displaying such weakness.

If you want to meet Bro. Mark, turn to chapter 14. There is an unnamed young man in Mark 14, who is probably Mark himself. I say that because Mark does not give us the man's name and because this is the only time this incident is mentioned in Scripture. After our Lord's arrest in Gethsemane, we are told that the disciples forsook him. But Mark adds what is found in verses 51 and 52.

(Mark 14:51-52) “And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him: (52) And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.”

Yet, this is the man God chose to use to give us this portion of his Word. An unfaithful servant was chosen, to record for us the perfect faithfulness of that Servant of God of whom it is written, “*He shall not fail,*” the Lord Jesus Christ. I am thankful for that fact. Aren't you? If the Lord used one failure, maybe he will use another (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

(1 Cor 1:26-29) “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:* (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to

nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

PETER’S INFLUENCE

Mark was Peter’s son in the faith (1 Pet. 5:13). He was converted under the influence of Peter’s ministry and taught by Peter. Because he was, as well he should have been, Mark was greatly influenced by his pastor, Peter. His Gospel narrative naturally reflects the teachings and viewpoints we see in Peter.

In fact, if you will look at Acts 10:38, you will see that Peter gives us a very brief summary of all that is recorded for us in the Gospel of Mark. Speaking in the house of Cornelius, we read that Peter stood among them and told them exactly what Mark tells us in these 16 chapters. — *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him .”*

(Acts 10:34-43) “Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (36) The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) (37) That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; (38) How God anointed

Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. (39) And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: (40) Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; (41) Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. (42) And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. (43) To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

Matthew and John, like Peter and Paul, were apostles of Christ. As such, they learned the gospel from the Master himself. Neither Mark nor Luke were apostles. What they learned of Christ, they learned, like us, through the preaching of others by the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the preached Word (Rom. 10:17).

PROFITABLE MARK

The human author of this Gospel narrative was John Mark, the son of Barnabas’ sister, Mary (Acts 12:12, 25; Col. 4:12). Paul and Barnabas eventually had a falling out because Paul refused to take Mark with them on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-41). But that is not the end of the story. At some point Paul and Mark did some fence mending, and in his latter days the old

man Paul found Mark to be one of few who were loyal to the gospel. As he was awaiting execution, he wrote to Timothy and said, “*Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry*” (2 Tim. 4:11).

MARK’S MESSAGE

As I said, Mark’s message can be summarized by the words of our Lord in chapter 10. — “*For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*”

Instead of opening with a record of our Lord's incarnation and birth, instead of telling us about his youth and early years, Mark begins at once with his ministry. Look at verse 1 of chapter 1 — “*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*” This is the beginning, but not the end, for there is no end to the story Mark tells. He is telling us the God-story of redemption, grace, and salvation by God’s Servant, “*Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*” But our Lord tells us that the story will go on forever, even in eternity. This is too wondrous to grasp; but our Lord tells us that in that great day called “eternity” “*he shall gird himself and make (us) to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve (us)*” (Luke 12:37). — We will never come to the end of the story. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is everlasting.

TIME FULFILLED

After describing the ministry of John the Baptist and our Lord's baptism by him (1:2-13), Mark gives a very brief description of the wilderness temptation (vv. 12-13). Yet, even in his brevity, Mark adds some things that show the greatness of that trial by which the faithfulness of Jehovah's Servant was proved.

Matthew and Luke tell us that our Lord was "*led*" of the Spirit into the wilderness. Mark's words are stronger. — "*The Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.*" It is Mark who tells us the temptation lasted forty days and that the Lord was "*with the wild beasts*" in the wilderness.

Then, he begins to describe our Lord's earthly ministry in verses 14 and 15 of chapter 1. — "*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*"

Mark tells us that our Lord stepped onto the scene of history and declared that the time God had promised for the accomplishment of his promises of redemption were fulfilled. That meant that the kingdom of God was now in the midst of men. If we enter into that kingdom we must enter in by faith's door, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. In due time, Christ came here to die for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4-5;). — "*When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were*

under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” He came here as Jehovah’s Servant (Phil. 2:5-8).

(Phil 2:5-8) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

FIRST DISCIPLES

Immediately after announcing our Lord’s appearance in Galilee, calling sinners to repentance, Mark shows us what is meant by that. In verses 16-18 we are told how that the Lord Jesus called his first disciples, Simon and Andrew, James and John. Those who repent and believe, those who come to and follow Christ, those who are born into his kingdom are called by him. And those who are called by him forsake all and follow him.

FULL OF ACTIVITY

The Gospel of Mark is a book full of activity. He moves rapidly from one place to another and from one miracle to another. The words “*immediately,*” “*forthwith,*” “*anon,*” and “*straightway*” meet us constantly in these 16 chapters. Many of the chapters begin with the word “*And.*” If Mark were telling us his story orally, we might

say, “Slow down. Catch your breath. You’re moving too fast.” That is exactly the sense the Holy Spirit intends to give us in this book. Mark is describing God’s faithful Servant, our all-glorious Christ, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of his Father. He had nothing to call his own, not even his time. — O Lord, my God, give me grace to be such a servant!

- **Mark moves like lightning in declaring our Lord’s works in Galilee.** — He cast out demons and healed the sick (1:21-3:12; 5:25-34; 6:53-56; 7:24-37).
- **He gives us display after display of our Lord’s power and authority** as that Servant into whose hands the Father has given all things. — After giving us four kingdom parables in chapter 4, he calmed the raging sea and the troubled hearts of his disciples with his mere word (4:35-41). — He cast demons out of the poor Gadarene (5:1-20). — A woman was healed of her twelve-year issue of blood by the touch of his garment (5:25-34). — He raised Jairus’ twelve year old daughter from the dead (5:35-43). — He fed hungry multitudes by miraculously multiplying little (6:34-44; 8:1-9). — Twice we read of him giving sight to the blind. — Repeatedly, we read of our tender Savior having “*compassion*” upon needy souls.

PICTURES OF GRACE

These miracles were intended to display our Savior’s power and authority as that man who is Jehovah’s Servant, that man who is God, to show that he has power

and authority, by virtue of who he is and by virtue of the sacrifice he made in eternity and was about to make at Calvary, to forgive sins (2:9-10).

(Mark 2:9-10) “Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?* (10) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)”

It is therefore obvious that these miracles were intended to be pictures of his wondrous works of grace in saving lost sinners.

- Like **the leper**, saved sinners have been made whole by Christ, the Priest, who touched us and made himself unclean to make us clean. We are made whole by the omnipotent touch of grace.
- Like **the woman** with that twelve-year issue of blood, who had spent all she had on physicians of no value, we are made whole by virtue we get from touching him.
- Like **the Syrophenician woman**, we who have no claim on the children’s bread have obtained mercy, by faith in Christ.
- Like **the Gadarene**, we have been made whole and set free by the Master’s word of grace.
- Like **the blind men**, our Lord has given us eyes to see him and to see “*every men clearly.*” — The First

Man, Adam — The Last Man, Christ — The Fallen Man — The New Man!

- Like Jairus' daughter, the Lord Jesus Christ raised us up from the dead.

DETERMINATION TO DIE

Beginning in chapter 8 (v. 31), we see a marked determination in our Savior, Jehovah's Servant. He set his face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem, to suffer all the wrath of God as our Substitute.

(Mark 8:31) “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

(Isa 50:5-7) “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (6) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. (7) For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

The Lord Jesus did not come here hoping that the Jews would allow him to be their king, sitting on a physical throne in Jerusalem. He came here as the King to suffer and die, rise again the third day, and ascend to his throne to give eternal life to his elect by the virtue and efficacy of his blood atonement. He came here to do

the will of his Father, suffering death as our Substitute at Jerusalem, and nothing could deter or hinder him from accomplishing his purpose.

PETER'S REACTION

Look at Peter's response to the Lord's declared purpose (8:32). — “*Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.*” Matthew gives a fuller quotation of Peter's words. — “*Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee*” (Matt. 16:22).

Peter said, “Spare yourself of this, Lord.” That is always the response of the flesh to trouble. “Spare yourself.” Then the Master sternly rebuked Peter, saying, “*Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savorest not the things that e of God, but the things that be of men*” (v. 33).

Gill suggests, I think accurately, that “the Lord rebuked him in a very severe, though just manner; being touched in his most tender part, and dissuaded from that which his heart was set upon, and he came into the world for; whose keen resentment is seen by using a phrase he never did but to the devil himself.” The Master knew the source and cause of Peter's comments. The flesh, like Satan, is always opposed to the will of God. The flesh always chooses that which is easiest on and most appealing to the flesh.

That this is the meaning of this conversation between Christ and his errant disciple is obvious because of what follows in verses 34-38. If we would follow Christ, if we would be his disciples, if we would be God's servants (That is what it is to be a believer!) we must give up our will to his will. We must surrender the rule of our lives to the rule of God our Savior. That is what Jehovah's righteous Servant did in the example he left us in the rest of Mark's Gospel (1 Pet. 2:21).

TRANSFIGURATION

In chapter 9 we have Mark's account of the Transfiguration. — *“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power”* (v. 1). Then the Lord Jesus led Peter, James, and John up on the mountain top, and they literally did not taste of death till they saw the King coming in glory. Peter refers to this in 2 Peter 1:16-18.

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this

voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

The suggestion is that God's purpose for his elect and the purpose of our Christ's redemptive work is that we should not taste of death. He came to deliver us from the awful taste of death. Our all-glorious Savior tasted death for everyone he came to save that we might never taste it (Heb. 2:9), that we might ever behold and be the recipients of his glory as Jehovah's righteous Servant (John 17:22-26).

Then he identifies his family, those who shall behold and enjoy his glory forever, his children, the citizens and heirs of his kingdom. They are those who in this world cast all their care on him (9:17-24), becoming as little children taken into his omnipotent arms, trusting him as Lord and Savior (vv. 36-37) and blessed in and by him. Mark alone tells us that he took the little children up in his arms when he blessed them (10:13-16).

MONEY CHANGERS

Our Lord's last week on earth before the crucifixion begins in chapter 11. Here again, Mark tells us about a very significant event the other Gospel writers were not inspired to record. *“And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that*

sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple” (vv. 15-16).

This is not the same event John spoke of in John 2:13-16. That event took place at the beginning of our Lord's ministry. That which Mark records took place at the end of his ministry. For the second time, the Lord Jesus overthrows the tables of the money-changers, cleanses the temple. Mark says, he “*would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.*”

According to the Mosaic law, it was the responsibility of the priests to catch the blood the sacrifices on the brazen altar in the outer court and carry it into the holy place before the altar. Once each year the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle that blood on upon the mercy seat. All of this was highly symbolic of Christ's sin-atoning work.

He of whom the priests and the sacrifices were types had come to put an end to all this. He would not allow any man to carry anything through the temple. In other words, he ended the sacrifices. He is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4). In this act, our Lord was saying, “The Lamb of God has come to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

MORE QUESTIONS

Mark chapters 10-13 are primarily concerned with the questions people asked the Savior. In chapter 10 he

answers the Pharisees questions about divorce, the rich young ruler's question and the disciples' question about salvation, and James and John's question about greatness. He tells the Pharisees that marriage is forever. He told the rich young ruler that the way to eternal life is faith alone, that faith that surrenders all to Christ as Lord and God. When the disciples heard the conversation between Christ and the rich young ruler, and heard the Master's explanation of why that man so rich in material property and religious morality did not believe, they said, "*Who then can be saved?*" The Master answered, "*With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*"

In **chapter 11** he answers the questions of the priests, the scribes and the elders who come out of hatred for him and try to trap him with their questions about his authority to purge the temple. He answered them by refusing to answer them.

In **chapter 12** Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and a scribe who tried to trap him with their questions. The Lord knew their hypocrisy and answered them accordingly. The Pharisees and Herodians were trying to get him to say something that could be used to accuse him of stirring insurrection against Caesar. The Sadducees tried to trick him into saying something that might be twisted into a denial of the resurrection. Then a scribe tried to trick him into speaking a word against the law.

In **chapter 13**, as they sat on the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John and Andrew ask the Lord Jesus what he meant when he spoke of the destruction of the temple. They said, “*Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled*” (v. 4). The rest of the chapter is taken up with our Savior’s answer, warning them and us of the great danger of following false christs.

A GOOD WORK

Multitudes talk about good works. Usually, their intent is to defend their pretended good works of self-righteousness. In **chapter 14** Mark shows us an event that displays what a good work is. — “*A woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head*” (v. 3). Others, including the disciples, sharply criticized her.

“And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her” (14:6-9).

The Master said, “*she hath wrought a good work on me.*” That is the only time in the Bible anything done by a sinful human being is specifically called “*a good work*” by our Lord. That fact is very instructive. Good works are not what most imagine they are. A good work is a work of faith. This dear lady seems to have been the only person who understood and believed what the Lord had said about his death and resurrection. A good work involves personal sacrifice. It is always costly. A good work is a work of spontaneous love, wrought for Christ. A good work is doing what you can for the Savior. A good work is a work that God our Savior never forgets.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Beginning with **chapter 15**, we have the account of the crucifixion. Mark describes this as an act of horrible brutality done in the name of justice and righteousness. The Lord Jesus appears to be a defeated man, a tragic failure, his cause hopelessly lost. He is hounded, bludgeoned and spat upon. Finally, he is crucified upon the cursed tree between two thieves. Is this Jehovah’s Servant?

No wonder the high priests, as they saw him hanging naked, upon the tree, covered in his own blood and the excrement of men, laughed and said, “*He saved others; himself cannot save*” (v. 31).

That is a strange statement. Yet it is one of the most remarkable statements of gospel truth ever to fall from

the lips of men. It shows that God is able to make even his enemies praise him.

THREE THINGS

As we read this account, we see **three things that they could not make our Lord do**. *First*, they could not make our Lord **speak**.

(Mark 15:4) “And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.”

He could have called twelve legions of angels to deliver him; but the Master said nothing, and Pilate wondered.

Second, they could not make him **drink**.

(Mark 15:23) “And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.”

Why not? Had he drunk what they gave him, he would have saved himself the effect of the agony of the cross and the weight of the burden of all hell and all the wrath of God pressing upon him, but he would not. He would not spare himself.

Then, *third*, they could not make him **die**.

(Mark 15:37) “And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.”

“He unspirited himself.” He dismissed his spirit. He did not die at the hands of the Jews or the Romans. He died at the hand of God, by his own voluntary will, as Jehovah’s Righteous Servant (John 10:17-18; Phil. 2:8-11).

(John 10:17-18) “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

(Phil 2:8-11) “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; (11) And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

THE RESURRECTION

When we get to the last chapter and the resurrection of our Lord, we see his reason. He was silent and refused to appeal to Pilate or the crowd, because he was laying the basis for a coming day, when in resurrection power and glory every knee will bow and every tongue will confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. He would not drink to dull his senses because he was laying a basis upon which even those who stood around the cross might enter into a life eternal. He was laying the foundation upon which God can be just and the Justifier of all who believe. He was determined to die, that he might be exalted as Lord of all, to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him.

He would not let men take his life, but he voluntarily laid it down himself in order that he might overcome our greatest enemy, death, and forever deliver all who would believe in him from the power and awful sting of death. That is the Gospel. — He saved others, but himself he could not save. That is Mark's story.

MY FAVORITE VERSE

Before I send you home, let me give you my favorite verse in Mark's Gospel. It is not surprising to me that it is Mark and Mark alone who says what he does here (16:7). In this verse, he who was himself a disciple who had been unfaithful, speaks a word about his beloved friend and father in the faith, his pastor, Peter. He tells us that the young man who stood by the tomb of the risen Lord said to Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, "*go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.*"

It is as though he was reminding Peter, and all of us who are like him and Peter (weak, faltering, failing, sinful followers of Christ) that God's forgiveness of our sins in Christ is full, absolute, and complete. Christ died for our sins. That means, between us and our God and Savior, everything is alright!

The book of Mark began with the words "*the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" In the last two verses of chapter 16 we have the continuation. The Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah's Servant, is still carrying on his work, working through the preaching of the gospel by his church. — "*So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into the heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*"

Amen.