The Mission of Jesus, part 1

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.! John is away on vacation today.

Thankful to have Jeremy as a part of our team. If you would open with me again to Mark chapter 2. As we continue on in our study through the gospel of Mark, just to remind you last week at the first of chapter 2, we studied about the paralytic that was healed where his friends brought him to Jesus. And I want to go back to that account and get to a couple of things that we did not get to last Sunday, and then we will move forward in verse 13 where Jesus calls Levi to follow him.
Remember that Jesus is at the house teaching, and the four friends bring their paralytic friend, and they can't get in because there's so many people there. So they go up to the roof and begin to dig a hole in that.
I tried to explain to you last Sunday what the houses looked like in the first century, and what the roofs would have been like, and all that is happening as that takes place. And they lower their friend to Jesus.
[1:41] Jesus tells him that his sins are forgiven. And Jesus can tell, he knows, that the scribes and the Pharisees who are gathered there are angry with him for saying this.

They accuse him of blaspheming because in their mind only God can forgive sin. That's true. And that's what the scribes got right.
What they got wrong was not acknowledging that Jesus is God. And so Jesus says to them in verse 8, Why do you question these things in your hearts?
And then he says, Which is easier to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise, take up your bed, and walk. And last week I explained that what Jesus intends for them to be thinking here is that this is not merely rhetorical.
This is a question he wants them to consider. And the answer to the question is, It is easier to just say, to just verbally speak the words that your sins are forgiven, because if you just say that by itself, there's no objective evidence if you got it wrong.
[2:57] But to say, Take up your mat, rise, and walk, is the harder, because you can in an instant know whether this man has any authority and power with which he declares to have.

And so Jesus says to the paralytic, He says, Your sins are forgiven. And then He says in verse 11, I say to you, Rise, Pick up your bed, and go home.
Now, when He says that, as we considered last Sunday, if the man cannot do that, then you have no reason to trust Jesus when He says, Your sins are forgiven.
If He says, I have the authority to heal you, and He really doesn't, then that brings all of His words into question. Jesus makes clear, though, in verse 10, He says, But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.
I say to the man, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home. The reason Jesus heals the man ultimately, the greatest explanation of why Jesus does this miracle is to prove who He is.
[4:18] That He has all authority. And He has authority over sickness and disease, and He has authority to heal the body.

And Jesus says, I have healed Him so that you know that I have the authority to do this.
It's not the word dunamis that simply refers to power. It's exousia, which refers to divine, sovereign right.
He says, It is my right. It is my authority. I alone have the ability and the authority to do this.
I can say your body is healed, and it is healed instantly, and I can say your sins are forgiven, and you are forgiven.

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[5:19] He has the authority to do this. Now, there are a couple of things that we didn't get to last week that I do want to bring to your attention in verse 10.

He refers to Himself as the Son of Man. But that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.
The Son of Man is Jesus' favorite title He uses for Himself in the New Testament. And it is a title that would be familiar to the people of that day.
When He refers to Himself as the Son of Man, He is hearkening back to the Old Testament in Daniel chapter 7. Let me just read to you Daniel 7, 13 and 14.
I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a Son of Man, and He came to the Ancient of Days, and was presented before Him.
[6:24] And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. And His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, in His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

In the Old Testament, Daniel receives from the Lord the word that the Son of Man is the one that has ultimate authority to rule creation.
He's the one that's going to appear on the clouds. He's the one that's going to come back and call all things to its appointed end. This Son of Man designation is not only suggesting that He identifies with us, it's also a reminder that whoever is the Son of Man is the one with the authority, is the one who rules and reigns.
So when Jesus says in verse 10, but that you may know the Son of Man has authority, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.
Jesus is doubling down on this. His opponents clearly understood that when Jesus said, I forgive your sins, He was claiming to be God.
[7:50] As I mentioned last week, it's a bit of a strange thing. It's just people trying to do an end around to try to get away from reckoning with Christ because you've got in our world today these people who want to say, well, I don't believe Jesus is God, but I don't want to say that He was a liar.

And so what they choose is this kind of neutral ground that says, I just don't think Jesus really ever claimed to be God. Understand, there was nobody in this scene that misunderstood what Jesus said about Himself.
And not only does He say He has the authority to forgive sin, but just in case somebody missed it, and just in case somebody was talking and didn't hear Him, or just in case somebody says, well, surely He didn't really mean that, He then says in verse 10, I am the Son of Man.
Which takes all of their minds back to Daniel 7. And while it may be that today you hear the term Son of Man, and maybe for you that doesn't instantly connect back to Daniel 7, for them it absolutely did.
And they're saying, now wait a minute, you're telling me that you are the Son of Man. This is Jesus saying that at the end of the age, I will be the one you see coming on the clouds in absolute righteous judgment.
[9:28] Mark records for us a little bit later in chapter 8, verse 38, For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him, will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in glory of His Father and with holy angels.

To say you're the Son of Man is to say you're the one who's going to come down from heaven at the end of the age with the holy angels and be the one who sits in judgment of all humanity.
Mark 14, 61 through 63, Jesus says this, or the Word says this about Christ, He remains silent and made no answer. So again, the high priest asked Him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the blessed? And Jesus said, I am. And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.
Jesus makes no strange, hard-to-understand, veiled statement here.
[10:48] He says clearly, boldly, and plainly, yes, I am the Son of Man. I am the one who will return on the clouds in glory with the angels.

I am the one who will sit in judgment for all humanity. And you say, well, maybe the people didn't know what He meant by that.
Verse 63, and then the high priest tore his garments and said, what further witnesses do we need? In other words, they were crystal clear on who Jesus said He was. Let's be very intellectually honest with ourselves today.

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When you hear the gospel proclaim that Jesus alone can save sin, it's true, it's true, you may choose to reject that.
[11:55] You may choose to ignore that. You may choose to put off reckoning with that truth, but it is not because the truth is not clear.

we are all sinners, all in need of a Savior, and Jesus Christ alone is the Redeemer that saves sinners.
sinners. And even those who hated Him understood His claim. In the hardness of their heart and the arrogance of their spirit, they refused to submit, they refused to repent, but they didn't put Him to cross because He was vague.
He was clear. And can I also say this to all of us in this room who are believers? What this world needs from Christians today are men and women who are clear with what they believe.
The world does not need people who are trying to blend in or slide through or be so worldly that nobody would expect you're really a Christian but have just enough of Jesus in you that you slide through into heaven.
[13:28] It's not what the world needs. We need people who are willing to stand up and say, I believe the Bible. It is the Word of God. Jesus is the only way to heaven and salvation is found in no other name than Jesus Christ.

And what Christ calls sin is sin. What the Bible condemns is sin. And the good news is Jesus forgives sinners and those who would call upon the name of the Lord in Christ find grace and forgiveness and salvation.
We need to be clear with what we believe. There may be those who oppose what we believe. There may be those who hate us for what we believe.
Let it never be said they were not sure what we believed. And Jesus here gives us this example of saying, you heard me right.
I am the one who forgives sin. He tells the man to pick up his bed and go home.
[14:46] Now, a question comes from this. In fact, I had a couple of conversations after church last Sunday and throughout the week that were very good observations and good questions that came my way.

And the question is, if Jesus has the authority to forgive sin, which he clearly says that he does, if he demonstrates and proves he has authority to forgive sin, which he does by telling the man to rise and walk, and he takes a man who is paralyzed and he speaks into him complete physical healing as a way to demonstrate he is true to his word, and if he proves he has the authority to forgive the body, you can trust him, he's got the authority to forgive and heal the soul, if that's true, then why did he have to die?
It's a fair question. If Jesus has the authority to forgive sin, and if he does forgive sin, and in Mark 2, this is before the cross, why doesn't he just keep doing what he's doing, why do we need a cross if he has the authority to forgive sin, which he obviously does?
So keep Mark 2 Mark, but turn with me to Romans 3. It's a very helpful explanation through several conversations this week, which I so appreciate people who listen and think and want to study and want to learn.
I'm so grateful for a church like that. Go to, in Romans 3, go to verse 22, about the middle part of verse 22.
[16:48] For there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Let's just stop for a minute.

What that means is all of us are sinners. No distinction. It doesn't matter who your parents are. It doesn't matter what nation you were born in.
It doesn't matter what your background was like. We are all sinners. sinners. Now, you need to understand this is an important part of the gospel message because we live in a day and age where it is becoming increasingly unpopular to speak like this.
The world likes and prefers today, at least where we live, to talk in terms of people who are more victims than sinners, but understand, while those who perpetrate injustice of any kind, they should be dealt with socially, absolutely.
Those who hate, those who would put people down because of the way they look, those who would hate people based on any physical distinction that is wrong and that is sinful, yet the truth is no matter who you are and no matter your background and no matter your education and no matter

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what someone else has done to you, here's your standing before God.
[18:25] All have sinned. We must be clear on that. sinned. All have sinned. And because we sin, it tells us that we fall short of the glory of God.

Now, verse 24, we are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So we're all sinners, all guilty before God, all in need of a Savior and that redemption's found only in Christ Jesus. Verse 25, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood.
Somebody ever says to you, how long has it been since you heard a sermon on propitiation? Those of you who are five who just joined our church, welcome to Big Church. You can tell your family the rest of your life, first Sunday in Big Church, I learned a big word that I still can't spell, but neither can my dad, so it's okay.
Propitiation. It's a big word that means the wrath of God is satisfied. Stay with me. All are sinners.
[19:44] Forgiveness comes only in Christ because God put Him forward to satisfy God's wrath because of our sin.

Because we are sinners. God puts Christ forward. He identifies with us. He's our substitute on the cross. And His death satisfies the wrath of God by His blood to be received by faith.
Not your works, by faith. This was, here's why, this was to show God's righteousness because, here's the problem, God's in His divine forbearance, meaning in God's patience, He had passed over former sins.
This is the problem. Before the cross, God has passed over former sins.
You may think that's not a problem. It is a problem if you're a holy God and you're forgiving people without a perfect, complete, final, ultimate, total sacrifice.
[21:00] In God's divine forbearance or patience, He passed over former sins. It was to show, Christ is put forward, to show His righteousness at the present time so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Meaning, all of these people who have been forgiven of their sin must have a perfect, final, absolute sin payment if God is truly just.
If there's no cross, there's no salvation. Abraham in the Old Testament believed and it was reckoned or credited to him as righteousness.
Abraham was saved by faith, not by works. Everyone is saved by faith, not by works. But it's by the cross of Jesus that the wrath of God is perfectly and completely satisfied.
God. So, when Jesus says, your sins are forgiven, it's in light of knowing Calvary's coming.
[22:35] The cross is coming. That perfect sin payment is coming. See, your sin as a Christian was not merely forgiven.

it was paid for. It's not just simply forgotten. It's atoned.
Jesus did not simply say, I choose to forgive you. He went to the cross and paid in full for your sin. sin. What authority, what exousia does Jesus have to say your sins are forgiven because he's the one who will pay in full for that man's sin?
What authority does Jesus have to say your sins are forgiven because he's the one who paid in full the price for your sin? Now, if that's true, what authority do you have to reject the word of God and live for yourself?
[23:58] As a believer, none because you were bought with a price. Not perishable silver and gold but the precious blood of Jesus.

Now, here's the really good news. The one who paid for your sin is the same one who is the son of man who is coming on the clouds with all authority!
And will bring judgment to the world. And don't you know he knows exactly who belongs to him.
See, when Jesus says, I am the son of man, everybody there understood exactly what he was saying.
You're telling me that you are the one who rules in sovereignty? And he says, that's exactly what I'm saying.
And for those who would believe, they are forgiven and saved. and for those who reject, they will hate him to a cross.
[25:20] And though he will be put to death, he is still the son of man. And he's the one who will come on the clouds with the holy angels.

Hebrews 9 27, not to bring salvation. To bring judgment. For today is the day of salvation.
Judgment awaits.

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So when Jesus says this back to Mark 2, there are those who are amazed.
But remember, he said the same thing in Nazareth. And in Nazareth, what did they want to do to him? They wanted to kill him. So just understand, believer, that when you share the gospel, some will believe and some may hate you for it.
Be encouraged. Happened to Jesus too. You don't change the message to try to find a favorable response. You present it clearly, boldly, with grace and with courage.
[26:37] And you say, no more, no less than Jesus did. He is the only way to heaven. Be as clear as he was.

Brings us to verse 13. It says, 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 Alphaeus, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, follow me. And he rose and followed him.
And as he reclined at table in his 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?
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.
[27:52] There are some different ways that today Christians choose to interact with non-Christians.

I think some categories that have been put forth are helpful. Some choose isolation, and they have no friends that aren't believers. They don't talk to anyone who's not a believer.
They don't associate with anybody who's not a believer. They just try to live in isolation. All their friends are Christians. Everybody they spend time with are Christians. The only people they talk to are Christians.
The only communication they have are with Christians. They try to completely isolate themselves from non-Christians. Others go the exact opposite route in what's been put forth as assimilation. These are Christians who want to be just like the world. They talk like the world, act like the world, conform to the world, try to be as worldly as they can because they want to not stand out.
[28:54] They want to blend in with the world. What Jesus shows us in this passage is a third option that I want to encourage you to make sure you're living by.

It's not isolation. It's not assimilation, but to live on mission. To live on mission meaning that we cultivate genuine friendships with those who don't know Christ, not to earn their favor, but to genuinely build relationships with them and out of love for them to share Christ with them.
If believers all isolate, how are we salt and light? If we only talk to each other and only have friendships with each other and if we're afraid to talk to unbelievers, how are they going to hear the gospel?
But if we become just like them and act and talk just like them and try to convince them we're just like them, then we're never going to open our mouth and speak the gospel.
What we want to do is live life on mission where we love people and serve people and cultivate relationships with people, but that we are clear with the gospel.
[30:10] This is what Christ did. So here in verses 13 to 17, we're just going to touch the first part of this next passage. We'll finish it up next time, but I want you to first write down the word consistency.

In verse 13, consistency. Look what it says that Jesus does. He went out again beside the sea and all the crowd was coming to him and he was teaching them.
This is what Jesus does. He's consistent. Jesus came preaching, the Bible tells us. He's a teacher. He is proclaiming salvation that is found in him and no other.
He is consistent. His life is consistent. His message is consistent. He just keeps going town to town and village to village and area to area and crowds come to him and he teaches them.
And as I said a moment ago, sometimes the crowds loved his message and sometimes the crowds hated his message. When Jesus fed the 5,000 men, as many as 15, 20,000 people are there when you account for women and children and their response to that was so strong, they tried to force him to be their king.

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[31:34] Other times, his message is just as clear and they try to take his life. But he just consistently accomplishes the mission for which he was sent.

He's not afraid to be with the religious leaders. He's not afraid to be with the outcasts. He's not afraid to teach out in public. He's not afraid to teach in the house.
He's not afraid to teach in a formal setting like the synagogue. He's not afraid to go out in the wilderness and teach. He just consistently keeps teaching the truth of who he is. It does not matter to him if the crowd is big or small, public or private.
It doesn't matter if the crowd is favorable or if they despise him. There is a blessed consistency in who he is and in what he does.
He keeps calling people to repent and to know who he is. He just keeps teaching the gospel message. I pray this would be true of us, that our life and our church would be marked with this kind of consistency.
[32:51] That whether it's a Sunday morning service with close to a thousand people like today or if it is a small home Bible study with four, either way, same gospel, same truth, whether you are teaching to hundreds or to three, makes no difference.

Be clear, be true, and be consistent in your message to point people to Jesus Christ.
I remember in a seminary class, one of our guest lecturers, a great godly man named Joel Beakey was with us and Joel Beakey was talking to us one day and challenging us as pastors to always be clear on the gospel message.
I'll never forget this. He said, if you have a Sunday and you've got terrible weather and you're the only person there, go into the sanctuary, stand behind the pulpit and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Seemed admittedly a little strange. And he said, don't you remember how glorifying it is to the Father to hear someone recount what he has done through the work of the Son?
[34:19] That even if there was not another person there to hear it, God is magnified, God is glorified, God is pleased when the gospel message is proclaimed.

So maybe you shared it with your neighbor and they mocked you. And maybe you shared it with your family member and they hate you. And maybe you shared it with a class member and they quit talking to you.
Understand that the greatest joy of your life is bringing glory to the Lord. God is glorified in it. And where God's people have faithfully spoken the truth of the gospel, his name is praised.
You have never shared the gospel where it was a failure. How can I say that? Because God is glorified in it.
No missionary who preaches the gospel has failed. No Sunday school teacher who studies, prepares, and speaks the truth has failed. No believer who shares the gospel with a friend has failed.
[35:44] When we are true to the gospel, clear on the truth, and magnify the name of Christ, he is glorified. Write down a second word.

It's the word calling. There's a consistency in what Jesus does and there's a calling in verse 14. And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax booth and he said to him, follow me.
And he rose and followed him. Who is Levi? This is Matthew. Most likely given a new name from Levi to Matthew as the Lord often did.
And he was a tax collector. Now we'll save for next time some of the details of what that means and why that would be so shocking that he would call a tax collector.
Let me just close by, I want you to catch this purposeful symmetry here as Mark records this gospel. Go back up to verse 11.
[36:55] When he heals the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go. In verse 14, after he calls Levi to follow me, and he rose and followed.

This is the norm for those who believe in Christ. They rise and they go. They rise and they follow. You see the picture in the man who is paralyzed. You see the picture in this outcast named Levi. Levi. Understand that just like as we studied a few weeks ago when Jesus healed the leper, nobody would touch the leper.
The leper was a total outcast. Jesus touched the leper and that was scandalous. My friends, a tax collector was no better in their eyes than a leper.

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Tax collectors were traitors. They were cheats. They were liars. They were crooks. They were sellouts. And Jesus touches the leper.
[38:29] And Jesus heals the paralytic. And Jesus says to the outcast, liar, thief, Levi, you, follow me.

And something struck in Matthew's heart and it says he rose and followed. He was forever changed. Now some of you this morning may say, I think I'm good enough to be okay.
Trust me, you're not as disciplined as the scribes and Pharisees. And they were not okay. And those of you say, my life's a mess.
Trust me, your life has no more problems than Levi's did. And yet there is a blessed consistency in the message of Jesus.
Believe in me. Rise up and follow. whether you are a child, an adult, in church every Sunday, or you can't believe that you came.
[39:46] The message is the same. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But God put forth his son Jesus publicly to satisfy the wrath of God for our sin so that God would both be just and the justifier.

And all who would believe in the name of his son shall be saved. And whether you are spiritually aware of your sin or whether you are spiritually clueless to your sin, on this day you have heard the gospel message.
Let it not be said it was not clear. Jesus says, He is the Son of Man.
He has authority to forgive sin. And for those who would believe in him by faith, he declares, Rise, walk, and follow him.
Would you even this day embrace that truth and follow the Lord Jesus? Lord, we thank you today for your word.
[41:10] And as we have just begun to scratch the surface of this next setting that Mark brings our attention to, we see already so much that we need to consider.

Those in our life that we think could never believe, may we never give up on them. Those in our life we have concluded are not worthy of the gospel.
God, forgive us when we have seen people like that. times where we have been quiet because we just want to blend in.
Times where we have tried to change the message so that it would be more acceptable. Times where we have looked at somebody and said, but they're liars, they're cheats.
And we write them off, but your son did not. He called out to Levi the tax collector and said, Follow me.
[42:23] And by the work of your spirit, Levi rose and followed. Lord, may that give us encouragement for our evangelism. May that give us fuel to say that you can save.

May it remind us that it's not our job to create the message. You've done that. It's not our authority to change the message. We have no right. It is just our responsibility to consistently preach and declare the message to trust in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Lord, make us more passionate. Make us more bold. Make us more loving.
Allow our heart to break more frequently at the sinful condition of others. And may we rise. Walk.
[43:35] Walk. Love. Walk. Hmm. Walk. walk. Pal. Walk. momento. zeath.

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