

Title: "Jesus The Teacher"

Text: Mark 2:13-22

We are continuing to "re-introduce Jesus" in our preaching and teaching this year.

- And we are currently exploring various aspects of Jesus' mission and message that the NT writers don't want us to miss.

- Two weeks ago we looked at Jesus as a healer: what that meant in his ministry 2000 years ago, and what it means for us today.

- Today I want to "re-introduce" you to Jesus the Teacher.

Everywhere Jesus went he spent time teaching and preaching about the Kingdom of God.

- And everywhere he went people were astounded by his Teaching.

- Both by what he taught about the nature of God's Kingdom, and the authority with which he taught it.

Turn with me today to Mark 2:13-22, and I'd like to read to you a typical "day in the life" of Jesus the Teacher.

So when we think of the word "teacher," most of us immediately envision a classroom setting in a school.

- The teacher is the one up front talking.

- The students are sitting at desks and listening.

I know that modern day classrooms don't always look like that anymore,

- with the desks all lined up in rows.

Today the classes are designed much more interactively,

- with work stations, and group settings for collaborative learning, and smart boards.

But still, we hear the word teacher, and most of us think about schools and classrooms.

Jesus was not that kind of a teacher.

- In his day most rabbi's had synagogues, which were called "shules,"

- and those were the settings in which Hebrew boys and girls would go to school.
- That's where they would learn to read and write, and what they would learn to read and write was the Torah.
- The first five books of the Bible were the curriculum for their schools.

And once they had learned the first five books, they would move on to the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel and Kings, and then the prophets.

That was Hebrew education, and it happened at the synagogue where the rabbi was the teacher,
-and it was reinforced in the homes where the father and mother were the primary teachers.

- But again, Jesus was not that kind of a teacher.
- He was called "rabbi" by his students, because he really was a teacher of the Scriptures.
 - Even the scribes and Pharisees acknowledged this,
-and acknowledged that he was really an exceptional teacher of the law.
 - But Jesus didn't teach like other people taught.

And this is what I want us to pay attention to today.

- I want to re-introduce you to the teaching ministry of Jesus
-so we can see what it actually looked like.
- And so we can see what it was meant to accomplish.

And I want us to do this, because in our lives even all these years later, we are called to be Jesus' disciples.

- That is, his students.
- And even to this day Jesus doesn't teach quite like anybody else you've ever been taught by.

So it might help if we begin to understand our teacher a little bit more: the ways he teaches, and what he is hoping to accomplish in the lives of his students.

So let's look first at the settings in which Jesus taught.

- If he wasn't a rabbi who taught in a synagogue or classroom, where did he teach?

And the answer is, everywhere.

-For Jesus, the whole world was his classroom.

Here in Mark 2:13 it says that Jesus was out beside the lake and a bunch of people came to him.

-So he began teaching them right there.

We know that the Sermon on the Mount took place one day when he was out by a hillside.

-He had all the people sit down on the hillside and he taught them right there.

And there were Sabbath days when he taught in the local synagogues,

-and there were times when he was in Jerusalem that he taught in the Temple courts.

But what I want you to notice is that Jesus was teaching all day everyday no matter where he was.

-He would teach his disciples as they walked along the road.

-He would see a field and tell them a parable about a Sower to teach them about the Kingdom of God.

-He would see a woman at a well in Samaria and use the image of water and thirst to teach her about the kingdom of God.

Jesus was teaching all the time.

-And not just with his words, but also with his actions and behaviors and his life.

Here in the next verses of Mark 2, Jesus leaves off teaching by the lake and as he walks through town he passes a tax-collector.

Jesus surprises everyone by inviting this tax-collector to follow him and become one of his students!

-No rabbi had probably ever done that before.

-Tax Collectors were notorious for being Jews who had sold out to the Romans.

-And who cheated their own people by charging more than was required by the Romans,

-and skimming the extra off the top for themselves.

But by inviting a tax collector to actually follow him and become a disciple,
-Jesus is teaching by his actions a whole lesson on what kind of people are welcome in the Kingdom of God.
-Even tax collectors and sinners!

And look what happens next:

-This tax collector, whose name was Matthew,
-is so amazed that Jesus inviting him to be a disciple, and that he is welcome in God's kingdom,
-that he throws a dinner party for all of his tax collector buddies and invites them to come to meet Jesus, too.

And Jesus goes to the party to meet them all, and eat with them!

-I can guarantee that no rabbi had ever done that before.
-And the reaction from the other teachers of the law confirms it: they are shocked and offended!
"Why does this man eat with tax collectors and sinners?" they ask.

They can't believe it.

-But you see, Jesus' actions have set up another teachable moment.
-And he reinforces the lesson by saying to the teachers of the law, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners."

You see, first by his actions and then by his words,

-Jesus has just taught an incredibly memorable lesson about the Kingdom,
-and about who he is in that kingdom.

The Kingdom is a place where the sick and broken can be made well,

-and he is the doctor who can help them.
-That's why he eats with the tax collectors and sinners.
-They are the ones who are most in need of his services.

It makes perfect sense when you think of it that way,

-but no one had ever thought of the Kingdom of God that way before.

And here's the thing for all of us.

- Jesus was not only teaching people to start thinking in a new way,
 - his goal was that they would also start living in a new way.
- He wanted tax collectors and sinners to start seeing themselves in a new way and living a new way.
- He also wanted teachers of the law and righteous people to start seeing themselves and seeing others and seeing the Kingdom of God in a new way,
 - and begin living differently towards each other as a result.

You see, Jesus' lessons weren't just about gaining more information.

- His goal was always to change people's lives and attitudes and behaviors and relationships.
- He wanted people to not only know about the Kingdom of God,
 - he wanted people everywhere to come into the Kingdom of God and begin living as citizens of the Kingdom....like he was.

It was a life Jesus was calling people to live.

- And he was teaching that life by everything he said, and by everything he did all day every day.

I am sure that even at the dinner party with Matthew and his buddies, Jesus was teaching.

- He could use the dinner setting as an environment to live out the Kingdom of God before them,
 - and to talk to them about the Kingdom in ways that they could readily understand.

And then we see in verse 18, that some other people come to Jesus asking a question about fasting and feasting.

- They too seem to be wondering why Jesus is going to dinner parties and eating with sinners,
 - when John the Baptist and the Pharisees and other teachers of the law practiced fasting as a spiritual discipline rather than feasting.

And here we see another mode of teaching: the Q& A time.

If you read through the gospels, it's amazing how much of Jesus' teaching ministry was Q&A time.

-All kinds of people came to Jesus with all kinds of questions, and much of Jesus' verbal teaching was given in response to those questions.

And Jesus' answers were almost always surprising.

-He was a master of metaphors.

-He was constantly using images or stories to answer people's questions by getting them to look at the premise of their question in an entirely new way.

That's what he did with the teachers of the law when he answered their question about why he ate with tax collectors by telling them that it was the sick who needed a doctor.

It's what he does again now when he answers these people and their question about fasting.

-Jesus says, "Nobody fasts at a wedding! A wedding is a time for feasting!"

What!? You see what a surprising answer that is?

-I mean, who was talking about a wedding?

-These people come to Jesus wondering about his ministry and asking about the place of spiritual disciplines in his ministry.

-Nobody was talking about a wedding.

But Jesus is talking about his ministry and the place of spiritual disciplines.

-He just gives them an entirely new and surprising image of what his ministry is all about, and what the Kingdom of God is all about

-It's like a wedding, Jesus says.

-So the appropriate spiritual discipline is celebration and feasting.

-Because the Bridegroom is here!

And that leaves them all pondering the fact that Jesus has just kind of proclaimed that He is the bridegroom at the feast.

You see how Jesus teaches?

- Surprising images that cause his hearers to think in new ways.

- And in this case once again, it's not only that he wants his hearers to think in new ways,

- He wants them to learn to live in new ways.

- With this image of the wedding feast he was also subtly inviting them to join the party and feast with him.

And then, Jesus caps this teaching off by using two more metaphors about sewing an old patch on a new garment, and filling an old wineskin with new wine.

He's telling them that his teaching isn't like the old teaching they have always known and heard.

It is a new kind of teaching, and so it needs new kinds of ears and hearts and minds to hear it and receive it.

- It just won't fit the old categories.

- It needs new wineskins to hold the new wine.

And you see, these images too are an invitation to his hearers to hear and receive the new wine, and to drink it.

- He wants his hearers then and now, to take his teaching into themselves so that they become new wineskins themselves.

- That is, so that they become people in whom his new teaching finds a home, and begins to be lived out.

My friends, this is a typical "day in the life" of Jesus the teacher.

- He is teaching all the time and in every setting.

The world is his classroom. The Kingdom of God is his curriculum. And life itself is the testing place.

Jesus was a master teacher.

- But his goal then, and his goal here and now for each one of us, is that we learn from him as students so that we might become like him as people.

- He isn't just teaching us a Kingdom way to think, but a Kingdom way to live.

-He is always inviting his listeners to take the next step in living out what He has just taught and modeled for them.

Because, you see, he wants us not only to admire the kind of teacher he was.

-He wants you and me to be great teachers, too.

-He wants us to be like him, so that the words and deeds of our lives are a living display of what the Kingdom of God is like, too.

-All day, everyday, wherever we are, with the world as our classroom, and the Kingdom of God as our curriculum, and life as the testing place.

That's what disciples do, they become like their rabbi.

Let's pray.