



Leader's Guide

Session 2: The Plot Thickens

For Your Information Table:

	2.1-12	2.13-17	2.18-22	2.23-28	3.1-6
What is the story about?	paralyzed man	-call of Levi -eating with sinners	fasting	eating grain	man with withered hand
What is the setting? Inside or outside?	Capernaum @ home IN	By sea OUT > IN	✕	Sabbath in grainfield OUT	Sabbath in synagogue IN
Who does it say is present?	many	crowd	people	disciples Pharisees	Pharisees
Who asks a question? How?	scribes in their hearts	scribes of Pharisees to Jesus' disciples	people to Jesus	Pharisees to Jesus	Jesus to Pharisees
What is the question?	Why speak blasphemy? Who forgives sins?	Why eat with tax collectors and sinners?	Why do disciples of JB and Pharisees fast but not Jesus'?	Why doing what is unlawful on Sabbath?	Is it lawful to do good on Sabbath?
What title or image is used of Jesus?	Son of Man	Physician	Bridegroom	Son of Man	✕
Who responds? How?	crowds amazed and glorify God	✕	✕	✕	Pharisees and Herodians plot to destroy Jesus

A1

B1

C

B2

A2

Some things to note about the table (Question 14):

Structure: A1 and 2 on healing; B1 and 2 on eating >> (A1 (B1 (C) B2) A2)

Location: IN > OUT > IN > OUT > IN

Questioning: increases in intensity: scribes in hearts > scribes to disciples > people to Jesus > Pharisees directly to Jesus >< Jesus to Pharisees

Questions: all have to do with the Law; first two on "sin"; last two on "lawfulness"

Titles: Jesus never directly refers to himself; the reader must (by faith!) make identification that Jesus is Son of Man, Physician, Bridegroom - in the last scene, you need to fill in the blank for yourself!

Response: The most striking thing about this set of events is the contrast from the response in the first scene to that in the last. How could this happen? By working through the increasing hostility we are led to understand what happened. Also note that in this kind of structuring of incidents (it is a common literary pattern called a chiasm), you usually expect to find a key thought in the center section. Note v.20! This is the ultimate response, and is actually the first prediction of Jesus' death.

For Your Consideration Questions:

1) Jesus notices the faith of the man's *friends*. Throughout Mark, there is a variety of connections

between faith and healing, but here we learn that faithful, believing friends are a great blessing!

2) (My reading of the story) It's easier simply to say, "Your sins are forgiven." After all, who can tell if you are successful or not (as would be the case if you told someone to get up and walk)? But, if Jesus is successful in the more difficult task of having the man walk, then the implication is that he must also have been successful in the 'easier' task of forgiving his sins.

3) The scribes are basing their complaints on passages like Exodus 34.6-7 and Isaiah 43.25 which suggest that God alone is the one who has the power to forgive sins. We have always had the power to forgive those who sin against us personally. Because of Christ, we all have the power to declare God's forgiveness to others.

4) A tough question - The story seems to assume that the man is paralyzed because he sinned, a thought which would not be unique to that time. (See John 9.1-3!) We don't want to say that there is some kind of specific relationship between sin and sickness such as you sometimes hear. (For example, some say AIDS is God's punishment of homosexual sins. What, then, about those infants who are born with AIDS or those who get it through transfusions?) On the other hand, when we confess that we are all sinful, we realize that we are all subject to sickness. Further, there is a 'natural' kind of connection such as if you should drive 100mph at night with your lights off while drunk. Something bad is quite naturally going to happen, and you shouldn't be surprised.

5) Tax collectors and sinners would be unclean. Eating with someone who is unclean makes everyone at the table unclean. As the scribes would say, "It's the Law!"

6) ...

7) The question is mainly meant to get your attention. Like Jesus, you would probably still want to maintain some distinction between loving the sinner and hating the sin.

8) ...

9) ...

10) If the Pharisees accept Jesus' appeal to the actions of King David as legitimate grounds for his own actions, then a relationship is being acknowledged between David and Jesus. Specifically, it hints that Jesus is the 'son of David,' and if so, then it is an admission that he is the Messiah. See Mark 12.35.

11) The last choice is closest to my way of understanding this saying.

12) The only way the Pharisees could have answered Jesus' question is by saying, "Yes, but..." How can one say "but..." when it comes to doing good? By being so concerned about the prohibition against working on the Sabbath, the Pharisees have lost sight of God's greater goals and concerns.

13) Another tough question, especially for us upper Midwesterners who always like to be nice. We do need to be reminded that loving and rejoicing over good necessarily means hating and being angry at evil.

14) See my notes above regarding the table.