

- 8) With regard to social structures, do you prefer things to be traditional? Innovative? A mix of old and new? How does this correspond to your opinion about spiritual matters? vv.
18-22
- 9) What are the old clothes and old wineskins in your life that need renewing? What is the “new wine” that you have received from God?
- 10) If Jesus appeals to the example of King David as a precedent for his own action, what is that implying about Jesus’ identity? vv.
23-28
- 11) How do you observe a sabbath day? What does Jesus’ saying in 2.27-28 mean for you? For example, does it mean:
- ✦ I don’t have to go to church if I don’t want to.
 - ✦ It’s okay to work or shop on Sunday.
 - ✦ A sabbath day is meant by God to be a gift to us, not a burden.
- 12) Why are the Pharisees silent in 3.4? What is it that they are concerned about safeguarding? 3.1-6
- 13) Note what emotion Jesus expresses in 3.5. When do you feel it is okay for you to be angry? When do you grieve?
- 14) Look at the table you filled out. What patterns do you notice?
- In particular, note that the three middle stories all have something to do with eating, but what is the deeper issue?
 - The first and last stories have to do with healing, but how do you account for the difference in responses between 2.12 and 3.6?
 - 2.20 is at the very center of this unit. What is important about this verse?



For Later:

- ◆ Think of a friend who could use some help or support or spiritual encouragement from you. Help that person!
- ◆ You may want to consider fasting. It is a practice that is especially appropriate during Lent as a sign of repentance. It could mean a day-long fast, skipping a meal or a snack, or simply not having that donut at church until after you have been refreshed with the bread and wine of Christ’s body and blood!
- ◆ Plan ways in which you will honor the sabbath day.
- ◆ Make a daily remembrance of your own Baptism by making the sign of the cross when you awake. Remember, you have been marked for life!



A Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark

Session 2



The Plot Thickens

Conflict and Controversy in Jesus’ Ministry



For Openers:

- ◆ When you were young, what was the biggest trouble you ever got in to?
- ◆ What was the fanciest or most expensive place that you have ever eaten?
- ◆ The most fun I’ve had at a wedding was when...



For Your Information:

- ◆ Read 1.45 and 3.7. Note how they are similar. They provide a ‘framing’ for what will happen in 2.1-3.6.
- ◆ As you work through the readings for this session, fill in the table laid out on the next page. You will note that we are working through five stories which deal with controversies Jesus has with the Jewish authorities. (An X means there is no answer for that square.)
- ◆ Read Mark 2.1-12.
 - Note the structure of this story: A healing story in verses 1-5 and 11-12 framing the controversy in 6-10.
 - Verse 4 on digging through the roof: In rural Palestine, a roof would have been made of crossbeams covered with thatch and dried mud.
 - Verses 6-7: Scribes (see 1.22!) were trained experts in Jewish legal interpretation. Blasphemy was a capital offense. It is the ultimate charge against Jesus in 14.64.

- Verse 10: Jesus regularly used the title “Son of Man” to refer to himself in an oblique fashion. Note that we understand that Jesus is referring to himself here, but technically he does not explicitly say so.
- ◆ Read Mark 2.13-17
 - Levi son of Alphaeus is never mentioned again in Mark. In the parallel passage in Matthew 9.9-13, however, this tax collector is identified as Matthew, one of the twelve disciples. As a tax collector, Levi would have been despised by other Jews for being an agent of Roman power and his probable dishonest dealings. (Tax collectors were able to keep everything over the sum they were required to collect for their region.)
 - Pharisees: A group of law-observant Jews concerned to bring all of Jewish society into conformity with the Torah (Law) just as God had commanded.
- ◆ Read Mark 2.18-22
 - John’s disciples: John the Baptist had a group of followers who were active even after his death. See Mark 6.29 and Acts 18.24-19.7.
 - Fasting was a sign of repentance (see Jonah 3.7-9) which observant Jews were to practice regularly. See Leviticus 16.29; Zechariah 7.5; Ezra 8.21-23.

- ◆ Read Mark 2.23-28.
 - A person was not supposed to work on the sabbath day, and, according to Exodus 34.21, this included harvesting. The Pharisees evidently regarded what the disciples were doing by plucking heads of grain to eat as work. (It was acceptable to eat grain from another’s field. See Deuteronomy 23.25.)
 - Jesus refers to a event in David’s life recorded in 1 Samuel 21.1-6.
- ◆ Read Mark 3.1-6.
 - The normal understanding of Sabbath law did allow for action to be taken if any life was in danger. A “withered hand” would not be regarded as life-threatening, however.
 - The Herodians mentioned here appear again in 12.13. They apparently are some group associated with the family of King Herod. The point seems to be that both religious (Pharisees) and political (Herodians) groups have realized the dangerous threat that Jesus poses.



For Your Consideration:

- _____ vv. 1-12 1) Read 2.5 again and note carefully whose faith it is that Jesus observes. When are some times when you have counted on the faith and the faithfulness of friends to get you through a hard time?
- 2) In order to catch the point of this story, ask yourself which would be easier to say to someone who was paralyzed: “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Stand up and walk”?
- 3) What would be blasphemous about forgiving sins? Whose sins do you have the power to forgive?
- _____ 4) What is the relationship between sin and sickness?
- _____ vv. 13-17 5) What is the unspoken concern behind the Pharisees’ question in 2.16?
- 6) If Jesus is the “physician,” how would you describe your spiritual health?
- 7) If you felt it was your calling to stop pornography, for example, how would you go about it?
 - ✦ Form a political action group to seek legislation to regulate it?
 - ✦ Call upon fellow Christians to stop supporting industries or advertisers related to pornography?
 - ✦ Have lunch with someone who promotes pornography?

	2.1-12	2.13-17	2.18-22	2.23-28	3.1-6
What is the story about?					
What is the setting? Inside or outside?			✕		
Who does it say is present?					
Who asks a question? How?					
What is the question?					
What title or image is used of Jesus?					✕
Who responds? How?		✕	✕ But note v.20!	✕	