

Mark 2

1. Icebreaker

If in a crisis, even at 3 a.m., which four friends would you call?

2. Opening Prayer

Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer

3. Tell the Story

Go ahead and assign someone to story Mark 3 for next week.

Make sure the person storying doesn't look at their notes. Also, everyone's Bibles need to be closed while they are listening to the person storying.

4. Read the Story (Mark 2)

Read out loud as a group, 4-5 verses per person, let everyone know they can opt out if they want to

5. Breaking it Down

Questions to be used (as appropriate based upon meeting dynamics) to facilitate discussion and understanding

5.1 What kind of person was brought to Jesus? (1---3)

A paralytic.

Why bring this paralytic man to Jesus?

Any chronic disease or ailment was thought of as a punishment for sin. A paralytic was totally dependent on begging or upon family members to meet their needs. Jesus' reputation as a healer was so strong that the paralytic's friends went to extraordinary measures to make sure their friend got to Jesus.

5.2 Since it was so crowded how did their paralytic friend to Jesus? (3---5)

The roof of a typical Palestinian roof was flat. It was constructed of earth and brushwood that was packed between wooden beams set about three feet apart. The roof was easily torn open and repaired.

What initiated the paralytic's sins to be forgiven?

Their faith. This is the first time in Mark that this word is used. Faith increasingly becomes the quality Jesus looks for in those he ministers.

5.3 What question does Jesus ask the teachers of the law in verse 9? (6---12)

"Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take you mat and walk'?"

Jesus responds to their question in typical rabbinic fashion: he asks them a question. It is easier to say, "Yours sins are forgiven," than it is to heal the man right then and there.

There is no way to verify whether sins have been forgiven, but it is obvious. Whether a lame man walks or not.

How did the people respond after they saw the paralytic take his mat and walk?

They were amazed. Mark's miracle stories often conclude with an observation of the amazement on the part of those who witnessed the event.

5.4 What did Jesus do when he went to Levi's house? (13---17)

He had dinner at Levi's house. To share a meal with another was a significant event, implying acceptance of that person. In this way, Jesus extends his forgiveness to those who were outside orthodox religious life.

The fishermen disciples may have paid inflated taxes to Levi for years. How would they feel when Jesus called him?

In verse 17, how did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' question, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus responds with a metaphor laced with irony. At first glance, the Pharisees would perhaps have considered this a reasonable explanation of his behavior: he came to heal those who were sick – which to them meant the "sinners" with whom he ate. In later reflection they might come to wonder if Jesus considered them the sick ones.

5.5 How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees in verses 19-20? (18---22)

"How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he with them?" God was often referred to as Israel's bridegroom, another subtle indication of Jesus' divine identity. After marriage a Jewish couple stayed with their friends for a week-long feast during which everyone was released from all religious obligations including fasting.

What two mini-parables does Jesus use to make his point in verses 21-22?

First one was about sewing an unshrunk cloth on an old garment. The second mini-parable was pouring new wine into old wineskins.

5.6 What concern do the Pharisees bring up to Jesus in these verses? (23---28)

They were concerned that Jesus' disciples were working on the Sabbath. The intent of the Sabbath is to rest. By the first century scores of regulations had evolved which defined what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. These regulations overshadowed the intent of the Law, becoming only another form of oppression. For example, in this case the regulations would insist these men go hungry rather than glean in a few ears of grain for food.

What does Jesus mean when he says, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath"?

Jesus declares that true holiness means that caring for people is more important than keeping the Sabbath. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and the final authority on its true meaning.

6. Application

Sample questions (as appropriate) to tie to life application

- 1) What does this passage teach us about God?
- 2) What does this passage teach us about mankind?
- 3) What is a command to obey in this passage? What has God revealed in your life that needs changing? What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

Personal Reflection/Application:

1. In what ways is sin like paralysis? What freedoms has Jesus' word of forgiveness given to you? Where do you need to hear that word again?
2. In this story about the paralytic do you identify more with the paralytic, his friends or the teachers?
3. Describe a time in your life when you felt like Levi and weren't accepted by the religious establishment?
4. How has the "wine" of Jesus burst your "old wineskins" – your religious rituals and ruts?
5. God's intent for the Sabbath was our restoration. Complete one or two of the following sentences:
 - I find physical restoration when I _____.
 - I find mental restoration when I _____.
 - I find emotional restoration when I _____.
 - I find spiritual restoration when I _____.

7. Prayer Requests

Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the LifeGroup. What happens in LifeGroup, stays in LifeGroup.

8. Closing & Prayer

*Don't forget get to confirm the next meeting date and time
Also recruit someone to do the story for the following week (Mark 3) if you haven't already done so.*

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