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Supernatural Power

Stories from Mark’s Gospel

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Week 2 | Mark 2

### Chapter 2 Summary:

This chapter is comprised of a series of “conflict stories” in Galilee between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. The action moves from suspicion about Jesus to outright hostility.”[[1]](#footnote-2) As we’ll see next week as we begin chapter 3, this hostility will escalate to the point that the Pharisees begin to plot to kill Jesus. This collection of stories is a “demonstration of Jesus’ authority and the refusal of the Jewish religious leaders to recognize it.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

# Day 1

## Read

### Mark 2:1–7 (NIV)

**2** A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

6Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7“Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

## Study

* It can be hard for us to imagine a first century house where you could dig through the roof! To see a picture, visit the Faithlife Study Bible and [read the note on Mark 1:4](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mk2.4).
* Commentator Timothy Gombis makes this observation:“Jesus says to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven’ (v. 5). After the healings being reported thus far in Mark, readers expect to hear of the paralytic being healed. Certainly the paralyzed man, along with his friends and those gathered in the house expect the same. Jesus, however, announces that the man’s sins are forgiven, which is a surprise. As the episode unfolds, it appears that Jesus uses this opportunity to confront his audience, and especially the scribes who are present, with the reality of his unique identity. If Jesus had simply healed the man, the scribes would have been able to remain passive observers, gathering information and considering how they might respond to him. But Jesus forces the issue.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

## Think about

* While the focus of this story is on Jesus, the teachers of the law and the paralyzed man, let’s not ignore the importance of the four supporting characters, the men who carried their friend. These men were determined to get their friend to Jesus, going so far as to dig a hole through the roof. It’s a good reminder to all of us that life is not to be lived alone. There may be times when we’re so weak that we’ll need our friends to carry us, and times when we’ll need to pick up the corner of a mat to help someone else. We need friends who know that no matter what the struggle, our ultimate help is Jesus, and it’s to him that we need to go. Do you have friends like that? Are you a friend like that?

## Pray

Part of our vision here at Christ Fellowship is to reach out to those who are lonely and isolated in our church family and in our community. Pray for the lonely. Pray for opportunities to have meaningful conversations with those around you. Ask the Spirit to give you eyes to see those who are longing for connection and the grace to become a friend.

If you are lonely, consider how your church family could help. Find a group, sign up to serve, come to an event. Check out opportunities to get connected on our website [cfhome.org](https://cfhome.org/). We want you to be known and loved here at Christ Fellowship. Let us know how we can help.

# Day 2

## Read

### Mark 2:8–12 (NIV)

8Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? 9Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? 10But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, 11“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” 12He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

## Study

Scholar N.T. Wright says, “We shouldn’t be surprised, then, that Jesus’ unexpected declaration of forgiveness sent shock waves running through the house, the village, the nation, and finally through the world. It wasn’t simply that he was committing a theological crime. The hole in his own roof was nothing compared with the hole he was tearing through an entire way of life. ***Forgiveness is the most powerful thing in the world, but because it is so costly, we prefer to settle for second best.*** Jesus, already on his way to paying the full price, offered nothing less than the best.”[[4]](#footnote-5)

## Think about

May we never take for granted the forgiveness we receive from God. It’s blood-bought forgiveness given freely to us because we are so loved by our Creator. Our sins are wiped away and we are made clean. It’s forgiveness that we extend to others because it was first given to us. Reconciliation with God and with each other is possible because of Jesus.

## Pray

How are you at confessing your sins and repenting from them? Do you truly seek the Spirit’s help in turning from sinful habits? Do you receive and accept God’s forgiveness, or are you plagued by guilt?

Are you quick to seek forgiveness and make amends when you wrong others? Are you quick to forgive when you are wronged? Pray over your answers and praise Jesus for his sacrifice that made your forgiveness possible!

# Day 3

## Read

### Mark 2:13–17 (NIV)

13Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

15While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

17On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

## Study

* The Faithlife Bible Study [notes on Mark 2:15](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mk2.15) help us with the cultural context of these verses. Take a look for insight into who was considered a “sinner” and why Jesus dining with them was such a remarkable thing.

## Think about

We need to be challenged by this picture of Jesus and examine our own hearts. Who do we look down on today? What kind of “sinner” would you have the hardest time sitting down with for a meal? A drug addict who lived on the streets? A white-collar criminal who spent time in prison for defrauding senior citizens?

Then ask yourself this important question, would they even want us across from them at the dinner table? Would they feel known and loved, or stereotyped and judged? Do we represent Jesus well enough that those society looks down on would be attracted to his Spirit in us?

## Pray

Jesus was determined to seek out those who needed him most. He brought healing and life-giving truth to those who came to him. As his ambassadors, we can do that to. Pray for opportunities to have meaningful conversations with those who are different than you, even if others would call them “sinners”?

# Day 4

*We’re having some great discussions about Mark’s Gospel on the Pastor’s Pregame Podcast. Listen in for more insights into these stories from Pastors Bruce, Jaime, Mark, and Lisa. You can listen at* [*CFhome.org/pregame*](https://subsplash.com/christfellowship-tx/lb/ms/+hg732gk) *or through* [*Apple Podcasts*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/pastors-pregame/id1582563644)*. New episodes every Thursday!*

## Read

### Mark 2:18–22 (NIV)

18Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, “How is it that John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?”

19Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. 20But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

21“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. 22And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.”

## Study

* According to Tim Gombis, “Jesus’s answer [in verse 19] involves both his presence and his absence. His disciples do not fast like other groups who long for God’s kingdom because it has already come in Jesus. Yet when Jesus is ‘taken from them,’ that will again initiate a time of fasting because his disciples will be anticipating Jesus’s return—his second coming—to bring in the kingdom fully. This is the situation for Christian disciples today. It is again a time of longing for God to restore all things. God has sent salvation ‘already,’ but we still live in the ‘not yet’ as we await his coming in glory.[[5]](#footnote-6)
* “The kingdom is a new reality that cannot fit within the confines of old realities, which is why the practice of Jesus’s disciples will be different from that of John’s and the Pharisees’ disciples. A new patch sewed onto an old garment ruins them both. And new wine poured into old wineskins bursts through and destroys the shriveled container and ruins the wine. In the same way, God’s people must prepare for something new.” [[6]](#footnote-7)

## Think about

As Christ’s bride awaiting our bride groom, we must live fully and truthfully into the world as it is. We know that our groom has triumphed over sin and death and has given us his Spirit as our comfort, power, and guide to live out his mission in this broken world, even as we eagerly await his return.

## Pray

Pray for the Spirit’s supernatural power as you seek to live for Jesus today. Ask him for strength, endurance, deliverance, and healing. Ask him to guide you as you navigate the “already” but “not yet” kingdom. Remember that your bride groom may appear at any time, and pray that you will be ready to meet him.

# Day 5

## Read

### Mark 2:23–28 (NIV)

23One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

25He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”

27Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

## Study

In verse 25, Jesus refers to a story about David. Read [1 Samuel 21:1–6](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/1Sa21.1-6). What comparison is Jesus making?

## Think about

Here’s how N.T. Wright interprets this story: “Jesus’ reply is a bit of a tease, but packs a strong punch. He doesn’t deny that the disciples are out of line with traditional sabbath observance, but he pleads special circumstances and scriptural precedent. He puts himself on a par with King David in the period when David, already anointed by Samuel but not yet enthroned (because Saul was still king), was on the run, gathering support, waiting for his time to come. That’s a pretty heavy claim: the implication is that Jesus is the true king, marked out by God (presumably in his baptism) but not yet recognized and enthroned. He therefore has the right, when he and his people are hungry, to by-pass the normal regulations.” [[7]](#footnote-8)

## Pray

This week we’ve seen just how much Jesus defied the expectations of the Pharisees. He’s not the Messiah they expected, and he’s certainly not one they can control. Reflect back on the stories we’ve read this week in [Mark 2](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Mk2.1). What are you learning about Jesus? How does he defy our expectations? How does he challenge our normal way of doing things? What has the Spirit said to you this week through God’s Word? Pray over your answers.

1. Timothy G. Gombis, [Mark](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Page.p+19&off=170&ctx=Mark+2:1%E2%80%933:6%0a~This+section+is+comprised+o), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, *The Story of God Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Morna D. Hooker, [*The Gospel according to Saint Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/black62mk?ref=Bible.Mk2.1-12&off=2201&ctx=%E2%80%98conflict+stories%E2%80%99%2c+~but+a+demonstration+), Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1991), 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Timothy G. Gombis, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Tom Wright, [*Mark for Everyone*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evry62mk?ref=Bible.Mk2.1-12&off=4131&ctx=lives+that+way+too.%0a~We+shouldn%E2%80%99t+be+surp) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Timothy G. Gombis, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Bible.Mk2.19-20&off=1648&ctx=is+impending+death.%0a~Jesus%E2%80%99s+answer+invol), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Timothy G. Gombis, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Tom Wright, [Mark for Everyone](https://ref.ly/logosres/evry62mk?ref=Bible.Mk2.23-28&off=3519&ctx=+and+new+movements.%0a~Jesus%E2%80%99+reply+is+a+bi) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)