

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**7-31-24**

**Mark 2**

**Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man – Verses 1-4**

<sup>1</sup> A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup> They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> Since 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.

**2:3** The paralyzed man's need moved his friends to action, and they brought him to Jesus. When you recognize someone's need, do you act? Many people have physical and spiritual needs you can meet, either by yourself or with others who are also concerned. Human need moved these four men; let it also move you to compassionate action.

**2:4** The crowd that had gathered made it impossible to bring the paralyzed man close to Jesus. Successful churches or busy Christians can be oblivious to needy people who want to see Jesus. In some churches, if the crowd is too thick and too disinterested, a needy person will simply wander away. How sad when the people in a church are so preoccupied with their own relationships and agendas that they don't even see those who are trying to get in. That should never happen. Where Jesus is present, may the faces of the faithful reflect his love, may their hands extend to greet all newcomers and seekers as friends, and may they open a way for others to come in.

**2:4** Houses in Bible times were built of stone. They had flat roofs made of mud mixed with straw. Outside stairways led to the roofs. These friends may have carried the paralyzed man up the outside stairs to the roof. They then could easily have taken apart the mud and straw mixture to make a hole through which to lower their friend to Jesus.

**Jesus Forgives The Sins Of The Paralyzed Man – Verses 5-7**

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."  
<sup>6</sup> Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

**2:5-7** The teachers of the law were in a perfect position, sitting where they could observe and criticize. Some sitting Christians follow their example. Is the music at church too fast or too loud? Is the sermon too long or too short? Do people aggravate you by sitting in your pew or dressing too casually? How much time do you spend worshiping in church and how much time do you spend complaining and criticizing? How about trying a little healthy activism— the kind that gets involved to work with fellow believers toward real progress on common goals, such as sharing the Good News, helping the needy, and building strong and caring disciples of Christ. Are you criticizing the church or changing the world?

## **Jesus Demonstrates His Authority To Forgive Sins And His Power To Heal Disease – Verses 8-12**

**<sup>8</sup>Immediately 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? <sup>9</sup>Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? <sup>10</sup>But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, <sup>11</sup>“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” <sup>12</sup>He 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!”**

**2:8-11** Before saying to the paralyzed man, “Get up,” Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” To the Jewish leaders this statement was blasphemous— claiming to do something only God could do. According to the law, the punishment for this sin was death (Leviticus 24:15-16). The religious leaders understood correctly that Jesus was claiming divine prerogatives, but their judgment was wrong. Jesus was not blaspheming; his claim was true. Jesus is God, and he proved his claim by healing the paralyzed man (2:9-12).

**2:10** This is the first time in Mark that Jesus is referred to as the “Son of Man,” a title emphasizing that Jesus is fully human. The title, Son of God (see, for example, John 20:31) emphasizes that he is fully God. As God’s Son, Jesus has the authority to forgive sin. As a man, he can identify with our deepest needs and sufferings and help us overcome sin.

**2:11-12** Immediately he arose: Imagine the tension in this scene. The scribes were tense because Jesus challenged them and said He would demonstrate He was the Son of God. The paralyzed man was tense because he wondered if Jesus really would heal him. The crowd was tense because they sensed the tension of everyone else. The owner of the house was tense because he wondered how much it would cost to repair his roof. And the four friends were tense because they were getting tired by now. The only one not tense was Jesus because He had perfect peace when He said, “arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” The man was immediately healed. The power of Jesus to heal and the authority to forgive sins were immediately vindicated.

**2:12** Imagine if Jesus had failed. His ministry would be shattered. The crowd would slowly leave the house. The scribes would smile and say, “He can’t heal or forgive.” The four men would struggle to pull up the paralyzed man who looked more dejected and embarrassed than ever. The homeowner would look at his roof and think it was all for nothing. But Jesus did not and could not fail because all He needed to heal this man was His word. There is wonderful healing power in the word of Jesus, in the promises of Jesus, for those who come to Him in faith. This man came to Jesus in faith, even if it was the borrowed faith of his friends.

## **Jesus Calls Levi And Eats With Sinners – Verses 13-14**

**<sup>13</sup>Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. <sup>14</sup>As 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.**

**2:13** He taught them: Jesus fulfilled the focus of His ministry as described in Mark 1:38. Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth. Jesus knew how to stay on focus. He saw Levi... sitting at the tax office: Levi (also known as Matthew in Matthew 9:9) was a tax collector. In that day, tax collectors were despised as traitors and extortioners. The Jewish people rightly considered them traitors because they worked for the Roman government and

had the force of Roman soldiers behind them to make people pay taxes. They were the most visible Jewish collaborators with Rome.

**2:14.** And He said to him, “Follow Me”: Understanding how almost everyone hated tax collectors, it is remarkable to see how Jesus loved and called Levi. It was a well-placed love because Levi responded to Jesus’ invitation by leaving his tax collecting business and following Jesus. In one way, this was more than a sacrifice than some of the other disciples made. Peter, James, and John could more easily go back to their fishing business, but it would be hard for Levi to go back to tax collecting. “Tax collector jobs were greatly sought after as a sure way to get rich quickly.”

### **Jesus Is Accused Of Fraternizing With Sinners – Verses 15-17**

**<sup>15</sup> While 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. <sup>16</sup> When 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?” <sup>17</sup> On 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.”**

**2:16-17** The self-righteous Pharisees were indignant that Jesus would eat a meal with such sinners. But Jesus gladly associated with sinners because he loved them and because he knew that they needed to hear what he had to say. Jesus spent time with whoever needed or wanted to hear his message— poor, rich, bad, good. We, too, must befriend those who need Christ, even if they do not seem to be ideal companions. Are there people you have been neglecting because of their reputation? They may be the ones who most need to see and hear the message of Christ’s love in and from you.

### **Jesus Questioned About Fasting – Verses 18-22**

**<sup>18</sup> Now 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?” <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. <sup>20</sup> But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast. <sup>21</sup> “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. <sup>22</sup> And 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.”**

**2:18** John the Baptist had two goals: to lead people to repent of their sin, and to prepare them for Christ’s coming. John’s message was sobering, so he and his followers fasted. Fasting is both an outward sign of humility and regret for sin, and an inner discipline that clears the mind and keeps the spirit alert. Fasting empties the body of food; repentance empties the life of sin. Jesus’ disciples did not need to fast to prepare for his coming because he was with them. Jesus did not condemn fasting, however. He himself fasted for 40 days (Matthew 4: 2). Nevertheless, Jesus emphasized fasting with the right motives. The Pharisees fasted twice a week to show others how holy they were. Jesus explained that if people fast only to impress others, they will be twisting the purpose of fasting.

**2:19** Jesus compared himself to a bridegroom. In the Bible, the image of a bride is often used for God’s people, and the image of a bridegroom for the God who loves them (Isaiah 62:5; Matthew 25: 1-13; Revelation 21: 2).

**2:21** Jesus did not come to patch up the old religious system of Judaism with its rules and traditions. His purpose was to fulfill it and start something new (though this “new” thing had been prophesied for centuries). Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came to earth to offer all people forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. This new Good News did not fit into the old rigid legalistic system of religion. It needed a fresh start. The message will always remain “new” because it must be accepted and applied in every generation. When you follow Christ, be prepared for new ways to live, new ways to look at people, and new ways to serve.

**2:22** A wineskin was a goatskin sewed together at the edges to form a watertight bag. New wine, expanding as it aged, stretched the wineskin. New wine, therefore, could not be put into a wineskin that had already been stretched, or the taut skin would burst. The Pharisees had become rigid like old wineskins. They could not accept faith in Jesus that would not be contained or limited by man-made ideas or rules. Your heart, like a wineskin, can become rigid and prevent you from accepting the new life that Christ offers. Keep your heart pliable and open to accepting the life-changing truths of Christ.

### **Jesus And His Disciples Are Accused Of Breaking The Sabbath – Verses 23-24**

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

**2:23** Jesus and his disciples were not stealing when they picked the grain. Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 23:25 say that farmers were to leave the edges of their fields unharvested so that some of their crops could be picked by travelers and by the poor. Just as walking on a sidewalk is not trespassing on private property, picking heads of grain at the edge of a field was not stealing.

**2:24** God’s law said that crops should not be harvested on the Sabbath (Exodus 34: 21). This law prevented farmers from becoming greedy and ignoring God on the Sabbath. It also protected laborers from being overworked. The Pharisees interpreted the action of Jesus and his disciples— picking the grain and eating it as they walked through the fields— as harvesting; and so they judged Jesus a lawbreaker. But Jesus and the disciples clearly were not harvesting the grain for personal gain; they were simply looking for something to eat. The Pharisees were so focused on the words of the rule that they missed its intent.

### **Jesus Responds With Two Principles – Verses 25-28**

**25 He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26 In 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.” 27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”**

**2:25** Jesus used the example of David to point out how ridiculous the Pharisees’ accusations were (this incident occurred in 1 Samuel 21:1-6). God created the Sabbath for our benefit; we are restored both physically and spiritually when we take time to rest and to focus on God. For the Pharisees, Sabbath rules had become more important than Sabbath rest. Both David and Jesus understood that the intent of God’s law is to promote love for God and others. The Christian faith involves many rules that are meant to be governed by love. That makes love the highest rule, but it also moves Christians toward personal sacrifice, discipline, and responsibility— scarce resources in today’s world.

**2:25** When confronted with rules of your own or others' making, ask: (1) Does the rule serve God's purposes? (2) Does the rule reveal God's character? (3) Does the rule help people get into God's family, or keep them out? (4) Does the rule have biblical roots that can be supported in the context of all of Scripture? Good rules pass all four tests.

**2:26** The "consecrated bread" (called the bread of the Presence) was set before God on a table in the Holy Place in the tabernacle (and later in the temple). Every Sabbath, 12 freshly-baked loaves of bread were set out, and the priests ate the old loaves. See Exodus 25: 30 and Leviticus 24: 5-9 for more about the bread of the Presence.

**2:28** Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath: The second principle was even more dramatic. Jesus declared that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. If He, the very Lord of the Sabbath, was not offended by His disciple's actions, then these sideline critics should not have been offended either.