

Mark 2:1-3:6

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In this fast paced action gospel account of Mark, Jesus begins his ministry with teaching and healing people in Galilee. Soon Jesus has a popular following by the common people but the Jewish leaders are untouched until a leper presents to the temple for verification of his cleansing. In over 1000 years no Jewish leper had ever been healed. Jews believed leprosy was a special punishment from God that could only be reversed when Messiah came. So the arrival of this ex-leper in Jerusalem would have really set the leadership questioning how he had been cleansed.

1. A Paralytic is healed

2:1-12

Several days later Jesus returns to Capernaum and encounters a huge crowd. Luke tells us that they included Pharisees and teachers of the law from every town in Galilee Judea and Jerusalem. Why had they suddenly turned up? That leper who came to the temple to be verified as cleansed made every Rabbi aware of the possibility that the Messiah had arrived. So now they come north to go through a recognised rabbinical process of verification of any such claim. First, they would **observe**. After further discussion among themselves, they would then allow **questioning**. Finally they would put him to the **test**. These three phases are seen in what happens next.

As Jesus is in this crowded room with all these high ranking Jewish Rabbis, the roof suddenly is torn open and a bed is lowered into the room. Jesus first words to the man shock the Rabbis "Your sins are forgiven". To the Rabbis, this is blasphemy so Jesus asks a valid question. "What is easier? To say your sins are forgiven or to heal a paralysed man?" But no one answers him. So he goes on to heal the man to prove that he had the authority to forgive sins. This caused amazement among the people but challenged the very foundation of Rabbinical thinking. They did not like it!

2. Questions of Association

2:13-17

Matthew decided to throw a party for his friends when Jesus called him to follow. But now the Rabbis see Jesus associating with the rabble and "low life" and question his motives. He answers with an illustration from medicine "It is not the healthy who need the doctor but the sick". This did not satisfy the Pharisees who believed that by association you were contaminating yourself and they would never do that.

3. Questions of fasting

2:18-22

Fasting twice a week was a tradition of the Pharisees that they did not observe Jesus or his disciples doing. So they start questioning his observance of their laws. It looks as if this Jesus is acting outside their boundaries and that was absolutely unacceptable to them. They believed that when Messiah came, he would be one of them, leading them in their traditions and enforcing the complex codes of the law built up over the last 400 years. He cannot be their Messiah because he does not do things their way.

4. Questions of the Sabbath

2:23-28

Among the many laws debated were laws of what constituted work, which was forbidden on the Sabbath. When they saw the disciples taking grain heads, crushing them, blowing away the husks and eating the kernels, that was harvesting, milling and winnowing – three activities absolutely prohibited on the Sabbath. Jesus defended his disciples' actions with an Old Testament example of David eating bread that only the priests were to eat. Jesus then makes the comment that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

If you are new or visiting; *a special warm welcome to you.* We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

THE PLAN

Singing

Worship

Quick Break

Singing

Children to Sunday school

Ross Pettigrew

This Week

Today

- Ross Pettigrew - Mark 2:1 - 3:6
- Japanese Christian Fellowship - 5pm

Friday

- Youth Group - Meet at the corner chapel at 6:30pm

Next Week

Sunday

- Andrew Stoprya - Mark 3:7-34
- Pot luck lunch followed by AGM - Youth Hall, Wray St.

Prayer Requests

- Please pray for next weeks service
- Please pray for the Youth Group
- Please pray for the Sunday School

5. A test case

3:1-6

It is now clear to the leaders that Jesus is not going to do things their way. He associates with the wrong people, he will not follow tradition and he breaks their Sabbath laws. So they set up a test case. This man with the withered hand was planted by the Rabbis to see if Jesus would “work” on the Sabbath by healing him. Jesus first challenged their thinking. “Is it lawful to do good or do harm on the Sabbath?” No one answered but the answer was obvious. After looking round in anger, he turned to the man and healed him. That was the last straw to the Pharisees who now conspire with their theological enemies as to how they could destroy him. The problem was they had to explain how the leper was cleansed when they had been teaching that only Messiah could do that. They had determined that he was not the Messiah. Proving it to the crowds who were following him was going to be more difficult.

Lessons for today.

1. What is really more important? Being physically well or having your sins forgiven? How can I demonstrate this in my daily life?
2. Do I have prejudices or feel threatened when I see others associating with people I do not approve of or doing things differently to what I do and believe? Am I like the Pharisees blinkered in some way to miss what God may be doing?
3. When there are controversial issues of behaviour, how do I decide if I should do something or not? When should I compromise my stand?

The issue for early Christians was “should I eat meat offered to idols?” and is addressed by Paul in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-10. From this 5 principles emerge.

1. Do not offend your own conscience. Rom 14:23, 1 Cor 8:7-8
2. Do not cause another brother to stumble. Rom 14:13-15, 1 Cor 8:9-13
3. Do not indulge yourself (liberty is not licence) 1 Cor 9, 10:12-15 Rom 15:1-3
4. Do not appear to do evil. 1 Cor 6:12, 10:14, 23-30
5. Do everything to the glory of God. 1 Cor 10:31

Small Groups**Tuesday**

- Ladies Home Group - see Laura Hannah 473-7954
- Mornington Home Group - see Jonathan Gauntlett 453-4195
- Central Home Group - see Steve Clark 479-2070
- Brockville Home Group - see Geoffrey Stewart 476-7888

Wednesday

- Pine Hill Home Group - see John Hannah 473-7954

Friday

- Halfway Bush Home Group - see Gideon Chang 476-7101

NOTICES

- 1) If you would like to receive **copies of the information** that is sent to the church and often finds its way to the foyer please email Zibi John to advise him you would like to receive this. zbjohn@gmail.com
- 2) There will be **no women's prayer meeting** over the school holidays (September 29th and October 6th). It will commence again on **October 13th**. Please note the change of time: the prayer meeting will now start at midday.
- 3) A **pot luck lunch** will be held on **Sunday, October 8th** at the Youth Hall on Wray St, Brockville after morning services. Please bring finger food - some pizzas will be provided. We plan to hold the **AGM** after lunch (subject to the program being ready).
- 4) Could you please register your interest in a **Christmas Eve service**. If there is sufficient interest we would like to put together a Christmas Eve service in either the corner chapel or the Youth Hall in Brockville. Please register your interest with one of the elders. We need people to pray for this outreach endeavour, attend the service, contribute to the planning and running of the program.
- 5) A young **woman from Wellington** who will be taking 1st year medical school next year is looking for a Christian family to **board** with. Please contact **John or Laura Hannah** if you can help.
- 6) The following **items of correspondence** are available from **Alan Knight** for anyone who wishes to request them:
 - Promotion material for 'Grape Vine' magazine
 - Fliers from Word of Life Ministries promoting youth reachout trips to Samoa and the Philippines.
 - Letter and sample flier from Bible League promoting Bibles for the Persecuted Churches of the World
 - Christian Broadcasting Assn News.
 - Covering letter and booklets from Francis E Rout for general reading.
 - Christian Resource Centre International magazine.
 - Making of Disciples Ministries (MODM) at Edendale Christian Fellowship leaflets available for next session on Saturday 14 October 2006, Speaker Georg Trew.