

Gospel Gems from Mark



Chapter 2

In this chapter Jesus responds to a number of challenges and questions about his ministry and the actions of his disciples. Fill in the blanks of these challenges:

- "Why does this fellow talk like that?...Who can _____ sins but God alone"? (v. 7)
- "Why does he eat with _____ and sinners"? (v. 16)
- "How is it that John's disciples...are _____, but yours are not?" (v. 18)
- "Why are they doing what is unlawful on the _____?" (v. 24)

In these verses we see how Jesus responds to these challenges and accusations.

Gospel Gem #1: Jesus can forgive sins! (2:1-12)



What prompted Jesus to tell the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven? Why did Jesus say this first to the man, before doing anything about his physical problems?

Why were the teachers of the law upset with Jesus for saying this? What is the answer to their rhetorical question, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

According to Jesus then, what purpose would his healing miracle serve?

Clearly Jesus DOES have the authority to forgive sins! But look up John 20:22-23. To whom has Jesus given the right to forgive sins? What are some reasons that this is very important for you to know?



Gospel Gem #2: He came for sinners! (2:13-17)

Levi is almost certainly another name for the disciple we know better as _____.

Why were tax collectors considered among the worst of 'sinners' by the Pharisees and others?

What does the Pharisees' question show about what they thought that a teacher of the law, or even the Messiah, ought to be doing and not doing?

What does Jesus say was the reason why he came?

How is Jesus answer a great comfort for us? How could it also be a warning?



Gospel Gem #3: Enjoy the new wine of the Gospel...in its new wineskins (2:18-22)

The next question that Jesus answered had to do with fasting, or abstaining from food. The Old Testament commanded one fast day a year on the day of atonement; but it was common for religiously minded Jews to fast much more frequently than this. (In one of Jesus' parables, a Pharisee brags that he fasts twice a week - Luke 18:12) What are some reasons why they might have done this?

How does Jesus answer the question of why his disciples did not fast? (verses 19-20) What does his answer mean?

Jesus then adds a couple of slightly cryptic short parables. (v. 21-22) What do both of them have in common?

Jesus does not interpret his parables for us, but their meaning is clear. How is what he was bringing something new (like the cloth and the new wine)?

The coming of Jesus meant that the "old wineskins" would need to be replaced. What do you think he meant by this? (cf. Colossians 2:16-17; Galatians 4:9-10)

Why can we be thankful that Old Testament-style religion and law no longer applies to us?

Bonus questions (if time)

Why did Jesus answer the accusation about the Sabbath day by telling a story about David's actions in the Old Testament?

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath". What point was Jesus making with this sentence? How might it still apply to us?

Gospel Gems from Mark



Chapter 2 - Pastor's answer page

In this chapter Jesus responds to a number of challenges and questions about his ministry and the actions of his disciples. Fill in the blanks of these challenges:

- "Why does this fellow talk like that?...Who can ___**forgive**_____ sins but God alone"? (v. 7)
- "Why does he eat with ___**tax collectors**_____ and sinners"? (v. 16)
- "How is it that John's disciples...are ___**fasting**_____, but yours are not?" (v. 18)
- "Why are they doing what is unlawful on the ___**Sabbath**_____?" (v. 24)

In these verses we see how Jesus responds to these challenges and accusations.

Gospel Gem #1: Jesus can forgive sins! (2:1-12)



What prompted Jesus to tell the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven? Why did Jesus say this first to the man, before doing anything about his physical problems?

It says that Jesus "saw their faith". This could mean that he looked into their hearts and saw their faith; or it could simply mean that Jesus saw the evidence of their faith in their determination to get their friend before Jesus.

Jesus' first words to the man show that he recognized that the man's greatest need was the forgiveness of his sins. As we saw last week, Jesus made the care of souls an even greater priority than physical healing!

Why were the teachers of the law upset with Jesus for saying this? What is the answer to their rhetorical question, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

They considered it blasphemy because Jesus was doing something only God had the right to do-- forgive sins that were committed against God. Their question is true--no one but God has that right-- but Jesus was about to prove to them that as God's only Son he too had the power and right to forgive.

According to Jesus then, what purpose would his healing miracle serve?

It would show that he had the authority to forgive sins.

Clearly Jesus DOES have the authority to forgive sins! But look up John 20:22-23. To whom has Jesus given the right to forgive sins? What are some reasons that this is very important for you to know?

Jesus told his disciples--his Church--that he was giving us the right to forgive or not forgive sins in his name. We call this the "use of the keys" based on a similar verse from Matthew's Gospel.

This is important because it means that we can trust that the pastor's announcement of forgiveness to us in church is just as valid as if Jesus himself had personally spoken it. It also reminds us of the responsibility we have in our own lives and as a church to preach the good news of forgiveness but also to warn those who do not repent that their sins are not forgiven if they persist in their unbelief.



Gospel Gem #2: He came for sinners! (2:13-17)

Levi is almost certainly another name for the disciple we know better as Matthew.

Why were tax collectors considered among the worst of 'sinners' by the Pharisees and others?

They were in the pay of the pagan Roman rulers and served that government that most Jews considered their enemy. They also had the reputation--often justified--of cheating in their tax collecting in order to personally enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow Jews.

What does the Pharisees' question show about what they thought that a teacher of the law, or even the Messiah, ought to be doing and not doing?

They expected the Messiah to come to destroy sinners and to praise and exalt the "good people" which they considered themselves to be. They expected any religious teacher to avoid the company of sinners.

What does Jesus say was the reason why he came? *To call sinners, not the righteous*

How is Jesus answer a great comfort for us? How could it also be a warning?

Whenever we feel guilt and are troubled by our sins, we can remember that this is why Jesus came. He did not turn his back on Levi and his friends, and he will not turn his back on us either! He came to save sinners just like us.

However, if we start to think like the Pharisees that we are better people than others and not in need of forgiveness, then we risk cutting ourselves off from Jesus--because he clearly states that it was sinners for whom he came.



Gospel Gem #3: Enjoy the new wine of the Gospel...in its new wineskins (2:18-22)

The next question that Jesus answered had to do with fasting, or abstaining from food. The Old Testament commanded one fast day a year on the day of atonement; but it was common for religiously minded Jews to fast much more frequently than this. (In one of Jesus' parables, a Pharisee brags that he fasts twice a week - Luke 18:12) What are some reasons why they might have done this?

It may have been for good reasons--as a way of expressing repentance for sin, or to help them focus on an important religious occasion. However, in some cases it may have been motivated by pride--the desire to show that they were better and holier than others were.

How does Jesus answer the question of why his disciples did not fast? (verses 19-20) What does his answer mean?

Jesus compared himself to the groom at a wedding feast. His coming into the world was the greatest event in history. As they came to see the meaning of this joyful act of salvation, the disciples would be moved to celebrate, not fast and mourn--just as fasting at a wedding would be unthinkable. However, he predicted that his disciples would mourn when he was taken from them by suffering and dying.

Jesus then adds a couple of slightly cryptic short parables. (v. 21-22) What do both of them have in common? *Something new is added to something old - with disastrous results*

Jesus does not interpret his parables for us, but their meaning is clear. How is what he was bringing something new (like the cloth and the new wine)?

Jesus' coming was ushering in a whole new age of the world. No longer would people be looking ahead to the Messiah, now they would look back at Jesus and his completed work and trust in him for salvation.

The coming of Jesus meant that the "old wineskins" would need to be replaced. What do you think he meant by this? (cf. Colossians 2:16-17; Galatians 4:9-10)

All the Old Testament laws and ceremonies, and the fasting associated with them, would no longer be necessary. We no longer have to follow them; in fact, in some cases doing so would be harmful to faith in Jesus.

Why can we be thankful that Old Testament-style religion and law no longer applies to us?

If you have read the Old Testament books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, you can see the sheer volume of hundreds of rules and laws that God commanded his Old Testament people to

keep. We can be thankful that this is a burden God has not laid on us. God gives us much more freedom in the way we live to serve him. Best of all, we have the ability to see God's saving plan completed and sins fully paid for by the work of Jesus.

Bonus questions (if time)

Why did Jesus answer the accusation about the Sabbath day by telling a story about David's actions in the Old Testament?

It was an example of how the need for hungry people to eat overruled the ordinary rule that only priests could eat the consecrated bread of the tabernacle. In the same way, Jesus declared that his disciples supplying their hunger was permissible to do even on the Sabbath Day. (It's also worth noting that what the disciples was doing was not really "working" and was violating only the Pharisees' man-made tradition about the Sabbath, not God's Word.)

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath". What point was Jesus making with this sentence? How might it still apply to us?

God intended the Sabbath Day to be a blessing to the Israelites by helping them devote time toward him and his Word, and to be a welcome relief from a life of hard work. It was not intended to be or cause hardship in people's lives.

It's worth thinking about whether we might become so legalistic about the way we enforce a rule--even God's commands--that we end up causing harm rather than the blessing the law intended. Of course, we also will want to be very careful not to use this as an easy excuse to avoid following God's Word altogether.