

MARK

Lesson 2

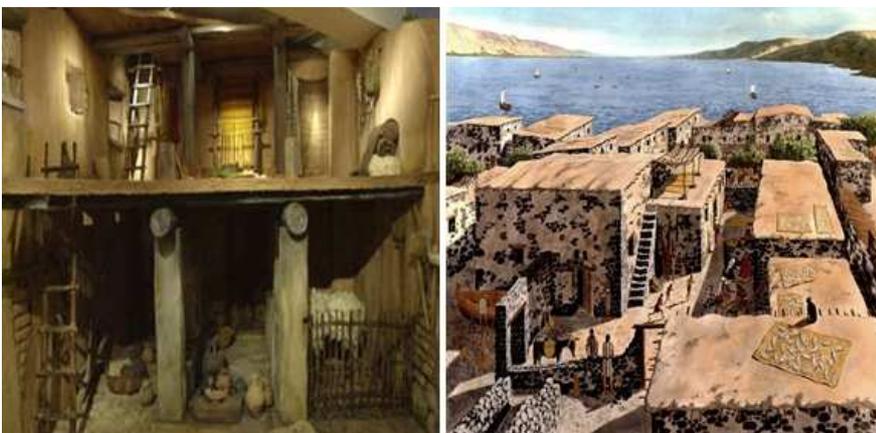
Mark Chapter 2

In the course of this lesson, we will be examining four stories in Mark's second chapter that add further insight into Jesus' ministry—and how it was misunderstood by so many early in his ministry. Having returned to Capernaum from his preaching trip along the shores of Galilee, Jesus continues to be surrounded by large crowds of people. This chapter again opens at Peter's home in Capernaum. The remaining ruins of his home, close to the synagogue in Capernaum, can still be seen there today.

To provide a little more insight into the type of home that someone wealthy might have owned during the time of Jesus, I am including two pictures of a wealthy man's home from that period; specifically, they are pictures of his mosaic patio overlooking the water. Here, he would have hosted many parties for the wealthy elite of his day. This particular home is off the coast of Israel overlooking the Mediterranean, however it gives us a good idea of what the tax collector's home may have looked like off the sea of Galilee when Jesus visited with him.



To add even further texture to our study, I have also included pictures depicting what a typical two-story "working-class" home during the time of Peter would have looked like. With a roof made of wattle and daub (a thick thatch covered in a plaster-like material), it is evident how easy it would have been to climb to the roof, make a hole, and drop a paralytic man through the ceiling, down to where Jesus was teaching. The art is by the artist Balage. These two depictions give us a good perspective on the differing lifestyles of the wealthy and the working class of Jesus' day.



With this background, let's read Mark Chapter 2 and consider the following questions:

1. We come now to a familiar story: the lowering of the paralytic man by his friends through Peter's roof so that Jesus would heal him. Read Mark 2:2-12. Note that it indicates that such a large crowd had crammed into the house, that everyone else pressing in to hear Jesus teaching had to remain out in the streets. In the crowd were a variety of people from all around the area, and it included a particular class of Jews. Which special group in particular had managed to get all the way inside the home so that they could sit and hear Jesus?
2. On what basis did Jesus forgive the paralytic of his sins, and what does this indicate regarding our involvement in bringing people to Christ?
3. Why were the teachers of the law so upset that Jesus had forgiven the man? Were they concerned that what the paralytic needed was healing, and Jesus wasn't healing him?
4. How did Jesus react to the righteous indignation of the teachers of the law? Did he lash out at their ignorance?
5. Having demonstrated that he had the power to forgive sins, and to heal, Jesus left Peter's home and walked along the lake, i.e., the Sea of Galilee. Large crowds continued to follow him and listen to his teaching. As he walked along, he came upon Levi the tax collector; we know him today as the gospel-writer, Apostle Matthew. Despised by the Jews, tax collectors like Levi often used fraudulent practices and gained great personal wealth as a result. Making them even more unlikable was the fact that these tax collectors directly served and reported into Herod Antipas, a corrupt leader in his own right. What was Levi's immediate reaction when Jesus asked Levi to follow him? (see Mark 2:13-17)
6. Jesus now has five named disciples, and all of them are invited to Levi's home for a large dinner gathering. Who else does Levi invite to this dinner?
7. While eating dinner at Levi's with the other tax collectors, disciples, and "sinners;" the Pharisees drop by to see what the party is all about, and they ask his disciples "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answers for them; what is his response? Why does he mention the righteous in his answer?
8. In Mark 2:18-21, Jesus points out something the that disciples had never considered: that Jesus was the "bridegroom." If that is so, then why should the disciples not be fasting? Why were they excluded from this?

9. Following his teaching on the bridegroom, Jesus uses a second illustration to demonstrate that the old ways of Jewish tradition were no longer going to work. You could not bring together their tradition and the new Gospel of Jesus, since merging the two together would never work. How does he characterize what this would look like?

10. As Mark's second chapter closes, we once again see Jesus moving through the Galilean countryside, followed by large crowds, including the Pharisees. As we observe in yet another example, the Pharisees are still judging by their standards; as they question Jesus about his disciples picking grain to eat on the Sabbath. What was Jesus' response to the Pharisees, and how does it apply to us as well? (see Mark 2:23-28)

As we move through our study of Mark and begin to see Christ's ministry and Gospel unfold, we need to be careful that we do not fail to see the truths that can be applied to our lives today. Let's be on guard and make sure that, in our zeal for studying God's Holy Word, that we do not become like the Pharisees. Instead, let's keep our eyes on the Cross and eagerly look for the day when Jesus will once again return. What a day that will be!

In Christ,

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