# **The Gospel According to St. Mark**

**Mark 2:1-17**

**Concordia Commentary – Dr. James Voelz, 2013**

## **Mark 2:1-12 – The Son of Man Heals**

* At home – Simon Peter’s?
  + Archaeological Find?
    - Built around 63BC
    - 20’ x 20’ square central structure
    - One story high
    - Roof of twigs, branches, and plant materials with a clay overlay
    - Main door opens to an L-shaped courtyard
    - Renovated multiple times from AD 50 – 550
      * Only house to at some point have plaster over the floors, walls, and ceilings.
        + Plaster helped illuminate interior areas for gatherings
        + Pottery finds also suggest it was not used for home use.
        + Graffiti on the plaster mentioning Jesus as “Lord” and “Christ” with other Christian symbols.
      * A house church to a church proper after the legitimation of Christianity.
        + Spanish nun in the late 4th Century wrote:

“In Capernaum a house-church… was made out of the home of the prince of the apostles, whose walls still stand today as they were.”

* + - * + Mid 6th Century, an octagonal basilica was built over the central room.

Byzantine time frame

Style used to commemorate special sites.

* Preaching the Word
  + “word” in the sense of a message or account
  + The proclamation of the Word is the focus of Jesus’ ministry
* Your sins are actually/right now being forgiven
  + Critical statement in the present tense
  + Strong assertion of Jesus’ divinity
  + Jesus is declaring that forgiveness is being applies AS HE IS SPEAKING
  + Strong testimony to the presence of the eschatological reign and rule of God as God is visiting His people with ACTUAL forgiveness of sins.
  + Another new teaching
* 2:6
  + A turn in action from the man and his helpers to Jesus’ opponents
  + Note what the scribes are doing!
    - Sitting
    - Questioning in their hearts
* Scribes
  + Leadership group that arose during the exile
  + Concerned themselves with the study of the Hebrew text
  + Concerned with Scriptural interpretation
  + Allied with the Pharisees
    - Conservative group
* Blaspheming!
  + Demeaning God by claiming to oneself what is appropriate to God alone
* Perceiving in His Spirit
  + Jesus knows what is going on in their hearts!
  + If the Holy Spirit motivates Jesus, who is motivating the Scribes?
* Which is easier?
  + It is easier to say “sins are forgiven” because you cannot see
  + It is easier to say “rise and walk” because only God can forgive sins.
  + Jesus’ first use of rhetoric
* Who is this “Son of Man?”
  + Although we have come to accept this term and connection to Jesus, it is not so easy to come to a clear understanding of why Jesus uses this term for Himself.
  + Connections in Scripture:
    - OT Connection
      * Psalm 8:4-6
      * Daniel 7:13-18
        + “one like A son of man” used to describe the glorious, triumphant, single figure to whom dominion and glory and a kingdom are given.

A corporate figure

“The saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever and ever”

The saints who endure suffering in 7:21, 25

* + - NT Connection
      * Hebrews 2:5-9 (with Psalm 8)
      * We recall that Jesus is Israel reduced to One, and Israel is described as God’s Son (Exodus 4:22)
        + We also heard this affirmation at Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan (1:11)
    - “The Son of Man” is used to affirm that Jesus Himself is THE Son of Man… humanity reduced to One.
  + Taking on the role
    - At His baptism in the Jordan, Jesus takes on the role of humanity
      * Fulfills Joel 3:1
      * Not as just another human being, but as God/Son of God Himself.
    - To call Himself “The Son of Man,” is for Jesus to take upon Himself the role of humanity as God/The Son of God Himself.
  + An Aramaic idiom for self-reference
    - It occurs in a number of Aramaic texts with the sense of an individual man, but with some kind of reference to the speaker, generally as he belongs to a particular class of people.
  + Not a Title
    - Nobody really reacts to Jesus calling Himself this.
    - A term conceived by Jesus?
      * Expresses deep theological truths not common to first century hearers
      * Allows Jesus to assert things about Himself while “flying under the radar”
        + Helps prevent premature arrest
  + Lack of use in the early church
    - “The Son of Man” is very rare in post-Gospel writings compared to “Messiah” or “Son of God”
    - The early church recognized, “The Son of Man” as a self-designation used by Jesus.
* The Son of Man’s authority
  + Jesus is THE Son of Man
    - Embodies both the people of God and humanity itself in His own person, but does so *as the Son of God* Himself
      * No understanding of a Son of Man figure in the OT allows that figure to forgive sins.
      * Forgiveness has been possible ONLY when God is involved.
        + (We can understand the scribes position)
    - Here forgiveness IS possible BECAUSE *the* Son of Man appears
  + On Earth
    - God has come to earth to forgive sins in the person of this Jesus
    - Forgiveness is NOT far off, but real and in your face, right here, right now.
  + Forgiveness is the focus of this section.
    - What is more important?
      * Forgiveness
      * Physical healing
    - There is no real restoration apart from the saving action of God incarnate.
* There he goes…
  + Nobody stops him!

## **Mark 2:13-17 – Look At What Jesus is Doing!!**

* Jesus is teaching
* Calling of Levi
  + Some confusion between Levi/Matthew or Levi/Jacob/James
    - Multiple names were not uncommon
  + Tax/Toll Booth
    - Capernaum was in Herod Antipas’ territory and the first stop for travelers and merchants from the Decapolis (Herod Philipp’s territory)
    - Such booths collected taxes on the transport of goods.
    - Ruling authorities farmed out the collecting of tolls to the highest bidder.
      * The winner could then charge as much as their little-old-hearts desired.
  + “Follow Me”
    - The Power of the Word and Jesus’ authority
    - Levi leaves it all behind.
* At Levi’s House
  + Note where Levi followed Jesus to!
  + Recline at table
    - No chairs
    - Common for the Greco-Roman world
      * Jews followed this practice at times
        + Regular meals they sat at tables
    - Table fellowship
      * Especially important in Middle Easter society.
      * For Jesus to eat openly with those who lived contrary to basic understandings of Scripture and traditions is not good for a “holy” man.
    - Jesus is not like John the Baptizer!
      * Jesus is not one who abstains from the good gifts of God’s creation but participates in them, anticipating the full restoration of God’s created order.
  + Sinners
    - He is with “unclean” people again!
    - Those who do not obey the Law and the oral traditions
      * The traditions taught by the scribes and Pharisees.
      * Not necessarily those who were leading openly sinful lives against the Ten Commandments.
    - May have included those who dealt with Gentiles for business purposes.
    - Galatians 2:15
      * The Gentiles would not have observed food, purity, and Sabbath laws
        + Things that make a Jew “good”
  + Disciple
    - First time the word is used in Mark’s Gospel
    - Pupils of a rabbi or master.
    - In Mark it may denote the Twelve
      * But can refer to a larger group
    - “Ya know, there were many who followed Him.”
  + Pharisees
    - People who separate (Hebrew) or abstain (Aramaic) from what God deemed to be impure.
    - Spiritual heirs of the Hasidim
      * Traditionalists who sought to keep God’s Law during the era of the Seleucid occupation of Palestine in the Second Century BC.
      * The Hasidim resisted with their lives both the imposition of Greek ways and the effort to stamp out the beliefs and practices of their Scriptures and traditions.
        + Much of this is portrayed in 1 and 2 Maccabees in the Apocrypha
      * By this, we can have a better understanding of the Pharisees’ aversion to the slightest threat to God’s Law or the traditions.
    - Some Pharisees were also Scribes
      * Acts 23:9
      * Heirs of the priest Ezra (served the people of Judah while in Babylonian exile, and upon their return worked to preserve the Law (Ezra 7:14).)
      * Scriptural scholars came into importance during the exile
        + Need for interpretation and application of the Law in a new environment.
      * Scribes were to “be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Law”
        + Fences made new laws to protect the Law
  + Who’s Jesus Gonna Call??
    - Sinners!
      * Righteous are like the strong who need no physician.
      * Are there any righteous people??
        + Nope
        + Everyone needs Jesus

But some think they are righteous and not sinners

Those who object to Jesus eating with these folks