

## Mark chapter 2

Still in the stages of the early Galilean ministry -1:14-3:6

Chapters 2 and 3 introduce a new element into Mark's story – opposition in the form of conflict stories on forgiveness, fasting and the Sabbath.

Cultural anthropologists describe the first century Mediterranean world in terms of a “shame-honor” culture – as opposed to ours which is often described as a culture of guilt. The question is in both instances “ how do does the culture get wrongdoers to change. Honor was tied to birth status - male or female, physically whole, part of a priestly family or slave family.

Elite families then demanded that people conduct themselves according to their “place.” Honorable men did so.

A note on expectations of women – women were generally expected to know they were weak, gullible, needy and not very smart. Thus they were dependent on the men in their lives to tell them what to do. Women were to be appropriately ashamed of being a woman and therefore would never act in such a way as to bring shame to the men to whom she was responsible. *Ruth's note – all this was and is garbage of course!*

In each of the controversy stories, the authorities hoped to dishonor Jesus publicly.

### 1. Jesus heals a man with paralysis, 2:1-12

Sin in ancient Israel was not always a moral failure. It could have to do with purity issues. Remember physical sickness and disability were considered punishment for sin. Sin most often meant exclusion from the community – forgiveness restoration to the community. Consequently Jesus' words, “ your sins are forgiven” are forgiven. The Greek word used for forgiveness is in the present tense meaning sins were forgiven before any physical healing – which would mean the man's paralysis was not the result of sin and that he could be restored to the community.

Once again Jesus is challenging the world as the authorities have defined it. Jesus is claiming the right to announce God is changing things.

Verses 8-12 While the power to forgive sins is the more outrageous claim, if Jesus tells the man to walk and he doesn't ( everyone would witness that) Jesus would be publicly shamed. Saying sins are forgiven is the easier of the two so Jesus heals the man to show that he is every bit as powerful as the miracle he does.

### 2. Jesus calls Levi, 2:13-17

Because tax collectors worked with the Roman oppressors they were the outcast of the outcast. To eat with them is to become an outcast also.

### 3. Jesus answers a question about [fasting](#), 2:18-22

### 4. The disciples pluck grain on the sabbath, 2:23-28

### 5. Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the sabbath, 3:1-6