

Day 8 (Tuesday 11th September)

Read Mark Chapter 2 verses 13 to 17

### Jesus Calls Levi

Jewish society was deeply divided in the first century. Many were despised as 'sinners' and tax collectors were seen as among the worst of them. They collaborated with the occupying Romans and collected more tax than necessary in order to line their own pockets. Some people saw themselves as 'righteous' and above people like this. They thought they were not 'sinners' because of the good things that they did.

Questions to think about.

1. Why did Jesus eat with 'tax collectors and sinners'? (verse 17)
2. Levi was seen as the lowest of the low. What does that tell us about who can be forgiven?
3. In verse 17 Jesus likens Himself to a physician. What admission is needed on our part for Jesus to be able to help us?

A prayer you may want to say

Lord we are sorry for the times we have thought of ourselves as better than others. Thank you that you chose to associate yourself with sinners. Be the physician of our lives and change us into the people you want us to be.

Day 9 (Wednesday 12th September)

Read Mark Chapter 2 verses 18 to 22

### The Question about Fasting

The Pharisees thought they were pleasing God by doing things like fasting all the time. Jesus shifted the focus to seeing who He really is and letting Him change our life from the inside? Being with Jesus gives us truly wonderful life. We can't just take Jesus and try to fit Him onto an existing lifestyle based on a set of rules. We need to let Him change us completely.

Questions to think about.

1. People don't fast at weddings! Who is the bridegroom in this passage?
2. When will the bridegroom be taken away from the disciples?
3. If Jesus is like a bridegroom for us what does the passage say about how much He loves us?

A prayer you may want to say

Living Lord, thank you for loving us. Help us see just how much you love us. Let us share in this wonderful new life of yours. Amen

Day 10 (Thursday 13th September)

Read Mark Chapter 2 verses 23 to 28

### Pronouncement about the Sabbath

The Pharisees thought they were pleasing God by keeping, to the letter, a very strict set of rules. Over time they had even added to the rules. God had given the Sabbath (our Sunday) as a day of rest for mankind's benefit, but they had turned it into a burden.

### Questions to think about

1. Are you getting a rest, one day a week?
2. Are there times when we expect others to keep our own strict rules?
3. Is Jesus lord in all areas of our life, or are there areas we keep separate?

Think back over the 1st two chapters of Mark's Gospel. What has stuck in your mind most?

### A prayer you may want to say

Lord, help us to find time to rest. Thank you that you have given us Sundays to enjoy with you. Please come into all parts of our life so that all we do is with you. Amen

Day 11 (Friday 14th September)

Read Mark Chapter 3 verses 1 to 6

### The Man with a Withered Hand

Christ's teachings and actions now aroused opposition. The Herodians were a group collaborating with the Romans and very different to the Pharisees. They start to plot together however against Jesus because he shows them up and doesn't do what they want.

### Questions to think about

1. Mark presents Jesus as the Son of God and Lord of all. How are we responding?
2. What grieved Jesus? (verse 5)
3. "To save life or to kill." What will Jesus do to save life?

### A prayer you may want to say

Lord thank you that you came and died for us in order to save our lives. We are sorry for the times when our hearts have not been totally open to you. Help us do right now as we seek to live for you, knowing how people judge you by what we do. Amen

Day 12 (Saturday 15th September)

Read Mark Chapter 3 verses 7 to 12

### A Multitude at the Seaside

Jesus withdrew to Lake Galilee but crowds came to Him from all over the country. 'Unclean Spirits' started declaring that He was the Son of God but Jesus stopped them. That was not the way He was going to be made known.

### Questions to think about

1. Why were the crowds flocking to Jesus? (verse 8)
2. Can you think of times when you have felt Christ's 'touch' on your life?
3. Jesus took unclean spirits seriously and silenced them. What should be our reaction to contacting spirits, using Ouija boards, seances and the like? (See Leviticus 19.31)

### A prayer you may want to say

Loving Lord, thank you that you are close to each of us now. Thank you that in our most difficult moments we can feel your 'touch' on our lives. Thank you that you have authority over everything, even the unclean spirits. Amen

Day 13 (Sunday 16th September)

Read Mark Chapter 3 verses 13 to 19

### Jesus Appoints the Twelve

Jesus called twelve to be his 'apostles'. The word literally means someone who is sent out – as a messenger or ambassador (representative). Luke's Gospel adds that Jesus spent a night in prayer before calling the twelve (Luke 6.12).

### Questions to think about

1. What was the first thing the twelve were appointed to do, before being sent out? (verse 14)
2. How can we spend time with Jesus before going out as ambassadors for Him?
3. In what ways can we be ambassadors for Christ?

### A prayer you may want to say

Lord God, thank you that you want us to be with you. Please help us as we seek to be ambassadors for you, showing your love and your power in our lives for others to see. Help us to become more and more like you so that others will see you in us. Amen.

Day 14 (Monday 17th September)

Read Mark Chapter 3 verses 20 to 30

### Jesus and Beelzebul

Jesus now has to deal with two sets of people. His family were trying to restrain him, because people were saying he had gone out of his mind and the scribes (educated professionals) were saying He was using evil powers. (Beelzebul is like the name Baal-zebul found in the Old Testament, meaning 'Lord of the flies'). Jesus points out that He wouldn't be casting out Satan if He was using the powers of Satan. He adds that by overcoming Satan, he will free us from Satan's control.

### Questions to think about

1. Have you ever been seen as 'strange' because of your faith? (Jesus was too.)
2. Have you ever felt hurt by what people have said about God? (Jesus was too.)
3. Are there temptations you are struggling with? (Jesus began His ministry by overcoming Satan in the wilderness (Mark 1.13). Jesus has the power to help us.)

### A prayer you may want to say

Lord, we are sorry for the times when we have failed to speak and act as we should. We are sorry for the times we have been weak and taken an easier course rather than the right one. All we can do is cling to your promise of forgiveness. Thank you so much that, like the leper whom you cleansed, you take away our sin completely. Thank you that your power is much greater than any power of evil and we can be free of any hold that Satan had over us. Amen.