



**theme:** The Gospel of Mark #3 – Who Is This Guy?

**materials:** Bibles, *Picture of Jesus* by Ben Harper

Starting this month we will be getting back to some basics and working our way through the Gospel according to Mark. Mark presents Jesus as the Son of God, and in particular as a Servant King. These first two chapters are a very sudden (and abridged) introduction into Jesus' life and ministry, and already he is getting under the skin of some important people.

## welcome

As each person comes in for cell, have them pick a piece of paper out of a hat. On the paper you will have written the name of someone famous, real or fictional (it must be someone that everyone would know). Everyone then has to act out their part as best they can, but not like they're on stage. Instead they have to act as if they were that famous person who was just attending cell (so how would Sean Connery, for instance, act at your cell meeting?) Try and guess amongst yourselves who each person is.

## interact

If you can, play the song "Picture of Jesus" by Ben Harper (if you have a computer nearby, it's on youtube, along with images from a Brazilian favela: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=AwjSzUMvH1s>)

Listen to the song, and as you do, ask each person to think about what picture of Jesus is in their mind. How do they see Jesus? What is He like? Where have they learned that particular image of Jesus? What does that picture tell you and others about Jesus, or about your relationship with Jesus? Share this with the group, and then pray that the Lord would reveal to you as individuals and as a cell a picture of how He wants to be seen.

## read

Read Mark 2:1-17.

What picture of Jesus is Mark trying to 'paint' of Jesus in this passage? What are some of the dominant themes of His personality that come through?

What picture of Jesus are the Pharisees seeing?

Why is this picture upsetting them? What do you think they expected to see?

What is Jesus declaring about himself by forgiving the paralysed man's sins?

Why did Jesus stop His important teaching to attend to the one sick man?

What is Jesus declaring about himself by eating with tax collectors and sinners?

Why would the Pharisees have trouble believing Jesus was from God when they saw who He ate dinner with?

Who are the "sinners and tax collectors" of our day that Jesus might want to eat dinner with?

Is there still a sense that good Christians shouldn't be in the same room with this kind of "inappropriate company"?

Is Jesus saying that the Pharisees and religious leaders were healthy and righteous, so they didn't need Him and His message?

What "picture" of Jesus do you think "sinners" mostly see now when they hear about Jesus from Christians?



## think

How can you be doing a better job as a cell at being with the despised and the sinners? And what “picture” of Jesus would you bring with you? How can you best show a Jesus who can both say, “your sins are forgiven” and “pick up your matt and walk”?

## live & pray

(IMPORTANT FOR NEXT WEEK!)

Try and keep a journal with you this week. Every time you hear about Jesus or read about Him or see an image of Him or listen to Him in prayer, jot down in your journal what you think was being communicated about Jesus. At the end of the week, try and sun up the picture of Jesus you received this week. Share this next week at cell.

## useful resources

Book: *The Jesus I Never Knew*, by Philip Yancey

Website: <http://www.freymanc.com/> -some beautiful images of Jesus

## leader's guide

Jesus' authority continues to come through loud and clear in this passage – authority to teach, forgive sins, perform miracles, keep whichever company he desires, and answer the religious authorities. His servant-heart also comes through, as He stops his “busy-ness” to attend to the one on whom He has compassion (and whose friends displayed such faith), and as he eats with those who were despised and rejected. He is being painted by Mark here as a servant King, and one who will not be run by any agenda other than his Father's.

The Pharisees and other religious leaders are seeing a man who is speaking of himself in very high terms, even blasphemous terms, but who is behaving in a way that does not conform to their notion of holiness and purity.

They were the guardians of the law and teaching, which was the only hope in their minds for Israel's protection and salvation. Jesus was a threat to that, because he ate with the ritually unclean (and co-operators with Rome), and because he displayed such obvious power.

Jesus in this passage declares that He has authority to forgive (something the Pharisees quite rightly placed in the hands of Yahweh alone) and that His mission is not just for a select few. His Kingdom is shockingly open to those who respond to Him with faith, and closed to those who think they have no need of Him. Jesus is not saying the Pharisees have no need of a Saviour, but He is speaking to people who believed they were already ritually clean.