

# Discussion Guide

Week of September 30, 2012

Mark 2:18–22

## Passage Overview

Mark frequently presents a series of stories linked by a common theme and these often overlap. The healing of the paralytic (2:1–12) shows us the authority of Jesus to forgive sins, but it also begins a series of stories in which religious leaders oppose Jesus. This opposition grows over time. At first, they only think it to themselves (2:6). Then they ask the disciples (2:16). Then they ask Jesus about the disciples (2:18, 24). Finally, they plot to kill Jesus (3:6). Each story helps to explain who Jesus is and why he has come. In 2:1–3:35, we see Jesus being rejected by the religious leaders of Israel. In response, Jesus chooses twelve apostles to be the beginning of a new community. Mark 2:18–22 highlights the nature of Jesus' kingdom compared to the traditions of Old Testament teachings.

## Understand God's Word—Read Mark 2:18–22.

- Read 2:18–19. Why do people fast? (What does it accomplish?) Why do you think John's disciples fasted so much (read 1:4–5)? Why do you think the Pharisees' disciples fasted so much?
- Look at verse 18. What does the complaint against Jesus and his followers tell us about the attitude and conduct of the disciples of the Pharisees?
- What three examples does Jesus give in response to this question (vv19–22)?
- In the Old Testament, the Lord is often referred to as "the bridegroom" (Isaiah 54:5–6). What are the implications of this for Jesus' statement in vv19–20?

## Live and Apply God's Word

- If fasting is a means of seeking God's presence, why does Jesus not make his own disciples fast? When can they fast (v20)? What does this mean for his disciples (Christians) today?
- Jesus uses two examples to illustrate his point—unshrunk cloth on an old garment and new wine in old wineskins. A patch shrinks once it's been sewn on and wine adds pressure to old wineskins—the two cannot be combined.
  - If fasting was an Old Testament tradition, what is meant by the new wine/unshrunk cloth in Jesus' analogy?
  - What does this say about the nature of the kingdom of God and the OT law?

## Turn to God in Faith and Repentance

- Jesus urged the people not to simply think of the kingdom of God as a "patch" for the "torn garment" of pharisaic traditions (outward piety). The gospel brings with it a radically new life with implications for all of life. How do we try to use the kingdom of God as a "quick fix" without truly submitting to it?
- How does the image of "wedding guests" indicate how Jesus' coming changes the way we use spiritual disciplines (e.g., fasting)? In other words, how does the gospel of grace change our religious practices?

## Pray

Thank God for the new cloth/wine of His kingdom. Pray for eyes to see if you have falsely tried to combine the gospel with anything that is not the gospel, seeking a better understanding of its implications for all of life. Pray also for Jim McKnight as he serves with Navigators at Ft. Benning.

## Announcements

- Men's Fall Cookout (Oct. 13; \$10) (*Sign up: Jim Money, jmoney1960@yahoo.com*)
- Deacon Candidate Q&A (Oct. 17)
- Lunch on the Grounds (Oct. 28; \$5) (*Tickets on sale now!*)