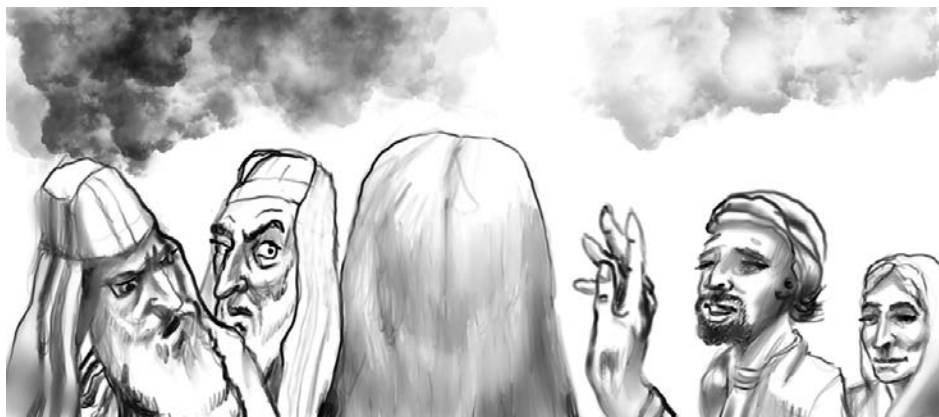


Disagreements



SABBATH—JULY 13

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Mark 2:1–12; Mark 2:13–22; Mark 2:23–28; Mark 3:20–35.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath day was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath day. So the Son of Man is Lord even [also] of the Sabbath day’ ” (Mark 2:27, 28, Nlrv).

MARK 2:1–3:6 contains five stories. These stories compare Jesus' teachings with the teachings of the Jewish leaders. Each story in Mark 2:1–3:6 is connected to the topic of the story that comes before it. The final story is connected to the first story.

Each one of the five stories in Mark 2:1–3:6 teaches us something important about Jesus (read Mark 2:10, 17, 20, 28). Jesus says many wise things in these stories. On Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, we will learn more about these stories and the meaning of Jesus' wise sayings.

On Wednesday and Thursday, we will study Mark 3:20–35.

Mark uses a special form or style of storytelling to tell his stories. This form of storytelling is named “Sandwich Story.” (You can learn more about Sandwich Stories on Wednesday.) Mark uses the Sandwich Stories style of Storytelling at least six times in his book. In each Sandwich Story, Mark tells us something important about Jesus and His work for us as our Savior.

This week, we will read some of Mark's stories about Jesus to discover what we may learn about Him.



These stories compare Jesus' teachings with the teachings of the Jewish leaders.

HEALING A MAN WHO CAN'T MOVE (Mark 2:1–12)

Read the story about the paralyzed man in Mark 2:1–12. A paralyzed man is someone who cannot move his arms or legs. What did the paralyzed man want when his friends took him to Jesus? What did Jesus give him?

The paralyzed man can't walk. So, his four friends carried him to the house where Jesus stayed. The four friends tore open the roof. Then the friends lowered the paralyzed man down to Jesus. Mark 2:5 tells us that Jesus saw the faith of the four friends. How can we see faith? We see faith the same way we see love. People show us their love when they do nice things for us. In the same way, when we do something because we believe, then we show our faith. The four friends showed their faith to Jesus when they brought Him their sick friend.

The first thing that Jesus does for the paralyzed man is to forgive his sins. The man doesn't say anything during the whole story. The Jewish spiritual leaders have plenty to say, but they do not say the words aloud. They are angry about Jesus' announcement that He can forgive sins. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus knows the doubts and the evil thoughts that are in their hearts.

If Jesus can make the paralyzed man walk, then this miracle is proof that Jesus is God and can forgive sins.

Read Micah 6:6–8. How do these verses explain what is happening between Jesus and the Jewish leaders?

The Jewish leaders' ideas about God were wrong. They refused to accept that God gave Jesus the strength to do the miracle. So, the leaders didn't understand the things that the miracle taught them about Jesus. Jesus gave the leaders proof that He came from God. Jesus showed them that He knew the doubt that was in their hearts. Then Jesus healed the paralytic man in front of them to show them God sent Him to this earth as the Savior.

The Jewish leaders cared more about their rules than they cared about God. Are we in danger of doing the same thing? What can we do to avoid this trap? As Christians, what is the most important thing that we should care about?



If Jesus can make the paralyzed man walk, then this miracle is proof that Jesus is God and can forgive sins.

JESUS INVITES LEVI TO FOLLOW HIM (Mark 2:13–22)

Who was Levi? Why do you think some of the Jewish spiritual leaders were upset that Jesus asked Levi to become His follower? Read Mark 2:13–22 for the answers.

Tax collectors in Jesus' day worked for the Roman government. The Jews from Judea didn't like tax collectors very much. Tax collectors often were not fair. They took more money from the people than they needed to take. Many Jewish tax collectors got very rich off the citizens from their own country. One Jewish book says, "If tax collectors enter a house, everything in the house is dirty."

So, we should not be surprised that the Jewish leaders aren't happy with Jesus for asking Levi, a tax collector, to become one of His followers. The leaders also want to know why Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners.

How did Jesus answer their question? Jesus says that people who are sick need a doctor, and not people who are healthy. Jesus is a spiritual doctor. He is the only One who can heal the sin-sick heart. So, a doctor should go to the people who are sick and who need his help, right?

Mark 2:18–22 starts a new story. In this story, the Jewish leaders ask Jesus about fasting. Fasting is a time when someone doesn't eat any food for a short while. The Jewish leaders want to know why Jesus' followers don't fast while their own followers and John the Baptist's followers fast. Jesus answers the question with a picture story. In this story, Jesus compares His being with His followers to a wedding feast. Jesus says that the guests don't fast at a wedding. They eat! But Jesus says that a time will come when the bridegroom will be removed. (Jesus was talking about His death on the cross.) When that day comes, Jesus' followers will have plenty of time to fast.

Jesus continues with two word pictures that compare His teaching to the teaching of the Jewish leaders: Jesus' teaching was the same as a piece of new cloth or new grape juice. You don't sew a new piece of cloth on an old coat or put new wine into old leather bags for holding wine. The old coat and the old leather bags are word pictures for the teachings of the Jewish leaders. The old coat and old leather bags show us that the behavior of the Jewish leaders became very bad. Religion can become evil if people are not careful.



Jesus says that people who are sick need a doctor, and not people who are healthy.

THE LORD OF THE SABBATH (Mark 2:23–28)

In Mark 2:23, 24, the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus' followers of breaking the Sabbath. The Jews had many rules about work. The Jewish leaders made a list of 39 things that their people should not do on the Sabbath. One of those things included the very thing Jesus' followers did.

How does Jesus answer the Jewish leaders? Read Mark 2:23–28 for the answer.

Jesus answers with the story about David. David went into God's house and ate the holy bread that only the priests or spiritual leaders were allowed to eat. Jesus says that if God allowed David to eat the holy bread, then Jesus' followers also can pick and eat the grain while they walked through the fields.

Jesus also says that God made the Sabbath as a blessing for humans. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark 3:1–6. How does this story show us Jesus' teaching that God made the Sabbath as a blessing for humans?

Again, Jesus gets into trouble with the Jewish leaders about the Sabbath. (Do you see that they never argue about which day is the Sabbath? No, the leaders fight with Jesus about how to keep it.) The Jewish leaders will accuse Jesus of Sabbath breaking if He dares to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus asks the leaders a question. The answer shows that doing good and saving lives are important. We can do good and save lives on the Sabbath. We don't break the Sabbath when we do these things.

Then Jesus heals the paralyzed man. The Jewish leaders get very angry. They decide to kill Jesus. The same leaders who accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath were guilty of breaking the Sabbath when they made a plan to kill Him.

What do the stories we read about today teach you about keeping the Sabbath holy? How hard is it today for us to keep the Sabbath? What are some of the problems that get in the way of our keeping it holy?



The same leaders who accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath were guilty of breaking the Sabbath when they made a plan to kill Him.

SANDWICH STORY: PART 1 (Mark 3:20–35)

Read Mark 3:20–35. What connection do you see between the two stories in these verses?

Mark 3:20–35 is the first “Sandwich Story” in Mark. Remember, a Sandwich Story is a type of storytelling where a writer starts telling a story and then begins telling another one in the middle of the first story. The writer finishes telling the first story only after the second story is finished.

The first story is about Jesus’ family members who decide to remove Him because people say He is crazy (Mark 3:21). The second story is about the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem. (Today we look at the second story, which is found in Mark 3:22–30.)

In Mark 3:22, the Jewish leaders say that Satan lives inside Jesus. The leaders accuse Jesus of working with the devil to command demons to come out of people. Jesus answers this insult with a question. He asks the leaders, “‘How can Satan cast [throw] out Satan?’” (Mark 3:23 NKJV). Satan never works against himself. Can Satan have success if he causes division in his own kingdom? Of course not! Jesus also talks about tying up a strong man before stealing from his house. In this last example, Jesus is the same as the thief who enters Satan’s house. Jesus ties up Satan and saves his prisoners.



Jesus ties up Satan and saves his prisoners.

Read Mark 3:28–30. What is the one sin that God can’t forgive? Why can’t God forgive this sin?

The one sin that God can’t pardon is the sin against the Holy Spirit. This sin includes saying that the work of the Holy Spirit is really the work that the devil does. Look at Mark 3:30. Do you see the reason why Jesus says what He does in verses 28 and 29? Jesus says what He does because the Jewish leaders say that Jesus is filled with an evil spirit. Jesus really is filled with the Holy Spirit. If you say that the work of the Holy Spirit is from the devil, then you won’t pay attention to the Holy Spirit. No one who loves God wants to follow Satan or his advice.

Do you sometimes feel worried that you did the sin that God can’t forgive? How does this feeling show that you did not do this sin? Why is your worry or fear proof that you didn’t do this awful sin?

SANDWICH STORY: PART 2 (Mark 3:20, 21)

What experience caused Jesus' family to think He was crazy? Read Mark 3:20, 21 for the answer.

Jesus' family thought that He was crazy. Why? Because Jesus was so busy that He didn't take time to rest and eat. So, Jesus' family went out to control Him. This story stops, and the second story starts about the Jewish leaders who accuse Jesus of working with the devil (read yesterday's study).

In a strange way, the first story and the second story are connected. Jesus' own family believes the worst about Him, just as the Jewish leaders do. Jesus' family says He is crazy. The Jewish leaders say that Jesus is working with the devil.

What does Jesus' family want? How does Jesus answer? Read Mark 3:31–35 to answer the questions.

We may think this story is strange. If your mother or other family members came to see you, you should meet with them, right? So, what's the problem? The problem is that Jesus' family members didn't understand God's plan for His life. Jesus knew they didn't understand. In these verses, Jesus gives us a new meaning for the word "family." The ones who obey God are Jesus' brother, sister, and mother. Jesus is the Son of God. The people who honor and obey God become God's family.

The two stories show us a strange and important Bible truth. In the first story, Jesus says that a family that is divided can't continue. When we first look at the two stories, we may think that in the second story Jesus' own family is divided against itself! But Jesus helps us to understand what these verses are saying when He gives us a new meaning for the word "family." Jesus' real family are those people who follow God and obey Him (read Luke 12:53; Luke 14:26).

Many times in history, Christians did not agree with their relatives. Mark 3:31–35 helps us understand that Jesus had the same trouble with His own family. Jesus knows how it feels when your family misunderstands you. So, He can give comfort and pity to people who feel alone.



Jesus knows how it feels when your family misunderstands you.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Levi-Matthew,” pages 272–280; and “The Sabbath,” pages 281–289, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“Jesus was asked the question, ‘Does the Law allow us to heal on the Sabbath day?’ [Matthew 12:10, Nlrv]. Jesus answered, ‘What if one of your sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath day? Won’t you take hold of it and lift it out? A person is worth more than sheep! So the Law allows us to do good on the Sabbath day’ [Matthew 12:11, 12, Nlrv].

“The spies for the Jewish leaders didn’t dare answer Jesus in front of the crowd because they were afraid the people would agree with Jesus. The spies knew that Jesus said Bible truth. The Jewish leaders would let a man suffer because they didn’t want to break their rules about the Sabbath. But the Jewish leaders showed more care for an animal than they did for a man that God made. All false religions work this way. They come from man’s wish to lift himself above God. But these false religions cause man to become as low as animals. Every religion that fights against the control of God cheats people of the honor that God gave humans when He first made them. God will give back this glory to us in Jesus. Every false religion teaches its followers not to care about the needs of other people or their suffering. The Good News about Jesus teaches us that humans are worth a lot because Jesus bought us with His blood. The Good News about Jesus teaches us to care about the needs and the suffering of other people. The Lord says, ‘I will make men . . . of more worth than pure gold, even the gold of Ophir’ [Isaiah 13:12, Nlrv].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 286, 287, adapted.



“The Good News about Jesus teaches us to care about the needs and the suffering of other people.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How can you and your local church help people who are suffering?
- ② The Jewish leaders hated Jesus so much. Their hatred “blinded” them to who Jesus really was. His miracles didn’t touch their hearts. So, they rejected Him. What can we do, as a people, to make sure that this same thing doesn’t happen to us?
- ③ How can your local church become “family” for people who lost their families because of their faith?

ONLY WHEN PEOPLE PRAY AND STOP EATING FOR A SHORT TIME

14-year-old Payel changed after her friend killed herself. Payel used to be outgoing and friendly. But now she was quiet and didn't talk to anyone. Then she started to scream, shiver, and shake for no reason. Payel was scared. She told someone that a person who looked the same as her dead friend visited her.

The ghost told Payel, "Come. I want to take you with me."

Two times Payel tried to jump off the balcony of her home. Payel's parents were very worried about their daughter. They called Rustam for help. Rustam was a Bible worker with Global Mission.

Rustam took four church workers to Payel's home to pray. But Payel wouldn't sit still. She screamed. She threw her hands up and down and stomped her feet. The church workers sang hymns. Every time they said the name of Jesus, Payel screamed, "Stop! I can't breathe. Someone is choking me!" Rustam understood that Payel was filled with an evil spirit. Rustam read from the Bible stories about Jesus commanding demons to come out of people. Rustam prayed. Then Payel became calm. But later that night, Payel's aunt called Rustam and said, "Payel is screaming again and says she sees her friend."

Rustam was confused. What did he do wrong? Then he remembered the Bible story about how Jesus' followers couldn't cast out a spirit. When the followers asked Jesus why, Jesus said, " 'But this kind [type] of bad spirit does not come out of a person unless people ask God and fast [do not eat food for a time]' " (Matthew 17:21, WE). Rustam called several other Global Mission workers. They fasted and prayed for two days. Then Rustam went back to Payel's house with a group that included an Adventist pastor.

When Payel saw the visitors, she tried to run away. Four people were needed to hold Payel down. She screamed as the visitors sang hymns for 30 minutes. Then Payel fell asleep while the pastor preached about Jesus. Rustam sprinkled drops of water on her face. Then she woke up and drank some water.

Since then, Rustam has visited Payel and her family every two weeks to pray with them. Payel is outgoing and friendly again. Rustam says, "We weren't ready the first time we visited Payel. We were ready the second time because of Jesus' words in Matthew 17:21."

Thank you for your prayers for Global Mission workers who are starting churches in places where no one knows about Jesus. Learn more on the website: <https://bit.ly/GMPioneers>.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The ghost told Payel,
"Come. I want to take you
with me."