

Forgiving, Following, and Fasting

Mark 2:1-22

We continue our new sermon series from the Gospel of Mark entitled "Follow That Man." In chapter one, Jesus burst on the scene with power, authority, and a compelling presence. Today we see how chapter two reveals more about Jesus' identity and purpose.

Three passages, three topics: Forgiving, Following, and Fasting

(1) Forgiving (Mark 2:1-12)

- Surprising words spoken by Jesus to the paralytic: "Son, your sins are forgiven." (2:5)
 - Scribes: "Who can forgive sins but God alone??" (2:7)
Indeed, good question!

- But can Jesus *really* forgive sins? To demonstrate his authority, he said this: "Pick up your mat and go home." (2:11)

- Later you will hear these words: "This is my blood, for the forgiveness of sins."

(2) Following (Mark 2:13-17)

- Why is it a big deal that a tax collector received the call "Follow me"?

(3) Fasting (Mark 2:18-22)

- Wait, no fasting *because Jesus is here?* (2:19) He thinks that his very presence alters religious practice?

Food today: Fasting, feasting, and the Lord's Supper

Questions for Reflection and Further Application

1. Read Mark 2:1-12. Divine forgiveness? Why is that so important? Do you feel like we have more direct and relevant needs than this? Financial difficulties, family strife, injustice in the world... How does divine forgiveness change me, you, and the world?
2. Read Mark 2:13-17. "Follow me." Name an aspect of your life where you find it very difficult to follow Jesus. Why? Ask for strength and Holy Spirit power to help.
3. Read Mark 2:18-22. Think about how fasting will one day be forever inappropriate—for we will be with Jesus. Consider this hope and joy.