

THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

~Week Two~

“Jesus, Friend of Sinners”

Mark 2:13-17



Life Groups

Welcome back to UPC’s study of the book of Mark entitled “The Surprising Jesus.” Whether you work through these studies on your own, with a friend, or with a UPC Life Group, they will help you develop a HEAD that enjoys God’s truth, a HEART of love for God and neighbor, and HANDS eager to serve the King.

A reminder... These weekly studies are coordinated with the Sunday sermons at UPC. On Sunday morning you will hear a sermon on a passage from the book of Mark. That week’s study guide will focus on the NEXT section in the book of Mark. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

LOOK BACK – Mark 2:1-12

In the previous section (Mark 2:1-12), some men lower their disabled friend through a hole in the roof to bring him to Jesus. Responding to their faith, Jesus heals the man of both his spiritual and physical paralysis.

a) What obstacles did the disabled man’s friends have to overcome in order to get him to Jesus? What risks did they have to take?

b) Does this determination on the part of the man’s friends give you any insights into what “faith” (verse 5) is?

c) Do you have friends like these? Are you such a friend to someone else?

d) What explains the less-than-enthusiastic response of the religious leaders to this healing (verses 6-7)?

e) In what ways does Jesus reveal Himself as an authoritative Savior in this passage?

LOOK UP – Mark 2:13-17

Jesus calls Matthew the tax collector (here called by his other name, Levi) to be His follower. Matthew not only accepts Jesus' invitation but also turns right around and invites a large group of his friends to meet Jesus over dinner. This gives Jesus an opportunity to show His heart for lost people and to confront the hard-hearted Pharisees.

Mark 2:13-14 – An Invitation to Follow Jesus

a) So far Mark has told us that Jesus called four fishermen and a tax collector to be His followers. What is surprising about Jesus' choice of associates?

b) In Luke's account of this incident (Luke 5:27-32), we read that Levi not only got up and followed Jesus, but that he "left everything" (verse 28). What specific things did Levi leave behind when he became Jesus' disciple? Why did he do it?

Mark 2:15-16 – An Invitation to Meet Jesus

a) How does Levi seek to influence his friends and colleagues with his new-found faith in Jesus?

b) Why do you think the Pharisees find Jesus' behavior objectionable?

Mark 2:17 – An Invitation to Know Jesus

a) Define what you feel Jesus means in this verse by “righteous” and “sinners.”

b) Do you find anything ironic about Jesus using the words “healthy” and “sick” to describe the Pharisees on the one hand, and the tax collectors on the other?

c) For whom is the gospel “good news”? Why?

LOOK IN – Reflect

a) Recall a time during the past week when you thought, spoke, or acted self-righteously. Describe what happened:

b) Reflect upon what you just wrote. How does that self-righteousness fly in the face of what Jesus came to do?

c) In what concrete ways can you fight the tendency toward self-righteousness?

LOOK OUT – Apply

Levi sets a wonderful example for us as he reaches out to his friends instead of retreating from them. Ironically, the longer one is a Christian, the more likely it is that s/he will be isolated from unbelievers. How many non-Christians are in your circle of friends? _____

What step will you take this week to build or deepen your relationship with someone who does not know Jesus? _____
