

# “Who Calls the Shots?”

*Mark 2:1 - 3:6*

## Introduction

The five episodes found in Mark 2<sup>1</sup>-3<sup>6</sup> share the common element of controversy or conflict over “Who calls the shots?”. The conflicts expose the differences that existed between Jesus and the religious leaders in a variety of areas, clarifying how Jesus’ understanding and experience of God compared with theirs. Through these experiences Jesus’ followers and opponents learned more about him and his mission.

## Discussion Questions

- 1) If you were in a crisis, even at 3:00 am, which friend(s) would you call?
- 2) **Read Mark 2:1-12.** Why had the crowd gathered at the house? What interrupts Jesus preaching and how does Jesus respond?
- 3) In what ways is sin like paralysis? Are there any experiences of forgiveness (either extending it or receiving it) that stand out in your experience?
- 4) **Read Mark 2:13-17.** Jewish sources distinguish two classes of tax officials, those responsible for the income tax like Zaccheus, and customs officers like Matthew located at bridges, canals and on state roads around the country to collect tolls, including customs on goods like fish.<sup>1</sup> How do you think some of the ex-fishermen disciples (e.g. 1:16-19) might have felt about Jesus calling Matthew? Why do you think Jesus did so?
- 5) Have you ever questioned Jesus’ choice of followers? Why or why not?
- 6) **Read Mark 2:18-22.** Why did people like John’s disciples and the Pharisees fast (Lev. 16:29,31; 23:27-31)? Why did Jesus’ disciples not fast?
- 7) How has the “wine” of Jesus burst some of your “old wineskins”?
- 8) **Read Mark 2:23-3:6.** Who in your family was (or is) always checking up on you to see if you “do it right”? What complaints are leveled against Jesus in each episode?
- 9) How and why are Jesus’ responses different from the Pharisees?
- 10) In each of the above scene Jesus clashes with the religious leaders. When have you clashed with a church or religious institution? Why?

Prayer Focus - How could we pray for you in your home or work setting this week?

---

<sup>1</sup> See William Lane, Mark (NICOT), pp. 101-102, “The practice of leasing the customs duty of a district at a fixed sum encouraged gross oppression by tax officers anxious to secure as large a profit as possible. When a Jew entered the customs service he was regarded as an outcast from society...and...from the synagogue.”

## WHO AM I?

Your name says a lot about you. Write your first name in the spaces below (beginning with the first letter on the first line). Then choose a word from each category that begins with the letter on that line.

\_\_\_\_\_ One thing I do for fun that starts with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ A place I've been that begins with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Something I'd rather not do in my spare time that starts with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ A friend or acquaintance whose name starts with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ A plant or animal I like that starts with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ A celebrity I admire whose name starts with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ A song I like that begins with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ One of my favourite foods that begins with this letter is: \_\_\_\_\_