

# 3. The good doctor

Mark 1:40-2:17

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## Introduction

Have you recently had to see a doctor? What kind of doctor was he or she? Did they have a speciality? In your opinion what makes for a good doctor?

In the reading today from the gospel of Mark the Lord Jesus compares himself to a doctor.

Mark 2:17

<sup>17</sup>On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

In the reading today we get a sample of the Lord Jesus’ patient list. Please read from chapter 1 verse 40 to chapter 2 and verse 17 to see the sort of people that the Lord Jesus was dealing with and to better understand the kind of doctor that the Lord Jesus is. By looking at this passage hopeful it will become clearer as to exactly what the Lord Jesus came into our world to do.

## The leper

Please read again verse 40 to 45 to discover the first person on the Lord Jesus' patient list.

1. What did the leper believe that it would take for him to be cleansed?
2. How did the Lord Jesus respond to the leper's plea?
3. What warning did the Lord Jesus give the man and how did the man respond to this warning?

### Think about it

Often the word leprosy was used to describe a large range of skin diseases some of which were highly contagious and others which were not. It didn't matter what kind of skin disease you had all of them were regard as leprosy and rendered a person unclean. This meant that they were separated from the community and were not to be touched. It also meant they were not permitted to draw near to the Lord in the Temple.

What is revealed about the motivation behind the ministry of the Lord Jesus<sup>1</sup>?

What possible reason might the Lord have had for not wanting the man to tell anyone about what had happened to him?

## The paralytic

The second man is paralytic who is brought to Jesus by four friends. Please read what happened in the case of this man. Please read chapter 2 verses 1 to 12.

4. How did the Lord Jesus respond to the paralytic being lowered through the roof?

5. What did the teachers of the law think that Jesus was blaspheming?

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Mark 6:34; 8:2 and c/f Matt 6:36.

6. What did Jesus do to show these teachers of the law that he had the authority to forgive sins?

Think about it

The Lord's response to the paralysed man being lowered down by his friends through the roof would have been completely unexpected. What does this incident suggest about the real need of the people coming to see Jesus?

What does this incident suggest about Jesus and the type of doctor that he is?

In what way should people come to the Lord Jesus for help?

## The tax collector

The last person on the list from today's reading is a tax collector. Tax collectors were usually greedy and dishonest people who were regarded by their own people as collaborators. They were working for the Roman occupying forces or their puppet kings. They were hated by the people of God and regarded as the worse kind of sinners. When the Lord called one of these tax collectors to follow him it became even clearer exactly what type of medicine the Lord wanted to practise and not everyone like it. Please read Mark 2:13-17.

7. How did the Lord Jesus respond to the large crowd near the lake?

8. What were the Pharisees raising questions about?

9. What is the point of the comparison that the Lord Jesus made between his work and the work of doctor?

## Think about it

The Pharisees didn't like the way that the Lord conducted himself around tax-collectors and sinners. In response to their criticism the Lord explained the type of medicine that he was practicing in Galilee. He didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Who are the sinners today that need the doctor?

How do you think followers of the Lord ought to be responding to sinners?

## Conclusion

This section of the gospel of Mark has highlighted the fact that the Lord Jesus has come into the world to save sinners.

## Think about it

What sort of treatment does he offer sinners?

How is it possible for the Lord Jesus to offer sinners forgiveness?

Do you think that there is anything that cannot be forgiven?

What do we need to do in order undergo such radical treatment?