



## Group Discussion Guide

### Gospel of Mark 2: Mark 2:1-12

**Big Idea:** *Our greatest need is the forgiveness of our sin.*

**Group Leader Connection:** Group leaders, co-leaders and apprentices, we'd love to have you at our group leader connection for FREE breakfast and coffee on *Saturday March 30 at 9:00A*. We'll be at the Bread Company in Urbana. You can RSVP here: <https://firstcc.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/31/responses/new>

**Leader Note:** You'll notice several of these leader notes throughout the guide. These don't have to be read out loud. But you can if they're helpful. They are simply here to help you navigate discussion with a little extra knowledge or helpful tips. If I can help you with anything before group, please feel free to get a hold of me! You can easily contact me at [daniel@fcc-online.org](mailto:daniel@fcc-online.org)

## ICEBREAKER: (5 MIN)

- **Question:** Think back on your entire life. What was the best group of friends you ever had? What was that time of your life like?

## CONNECT: (5 MIN)

- **Say this:** *When word about Jesus' healing power got out, it became really difficult for Him to go anywhere. Sure, He spoke powerfully, but no one really had experience with the kind of miraculous healings He had to offer. It's in this frenetic season of life we see one of the most interesting encounters Jesus had with a paralyzed man and his friends. And if we pay attention, this story can tell us a lot about our deepest desires and needs as people.*
- **Connect Question:** Imagine someone you loved was sick or in danger and you knew the only person who could help them. What would you be willing to do to find that person and connect them to your loved one?

## Starters: (15 MIN)

- **Read: Mark 2:1-5**
- **Question:** What does it say about the paralyzed man's friends that they were willing to go to such great lengths to help their friend?
- **Question:** Jesus' welcomes the paralyzed man and his friends but instead of offering healing He offers forgiveness. Do you think this confused the group of men? Why?
- **Read: Mark 2:6-7**
- **Question:** Why do some of the religious teachers seem to be offended at Jesus extending forgiveness?
- **Question:** Have you ever been uncomfortable with God or someone on behalf of God extended grace and forgiveness to someone else? What was that like?

## DISCOVER: (25 MIN)

- **Say this:** *On Sunday, we began to think about how forgiveness is our greatest need. Sometimes that is hard to believe. We all have things we go through that seem insurmountable and make it hard to focus on anything else. But even amid those struggles it seems clear that Jesus' greatest concern is our forgiveness, not necessarily our healing.*
- **Read: Mark 2:8-12**
- **Question:** Sometimes we can find ourselves more motivated by incredible acts like Jesus' healing than his proclamation of forgiveness. Why do you think this is?
  - **(Leader Note:** I don't imagine there is a "right" answer here. This is just meant to be a helpful question for your group as they process this passage.)
- **Question:** In this passage Jesus clearly establishes forgiveness before healing. Do you think He's trying to make a point here? And if so, what?
  - **(Leader Note:** It is important to remember that Jesus is in mixed company. There are skeptics or "scouts" there from the religious teachers who are motivated to find fault in Jesus.)
- **Reread: Mark 2:3-4**
- **Question:** This group of men clearly had confidence when Jesus came to mind. What thoughts and feelings do you experience when Jesus comes to mind?
  - **(Leader Note:** It'll be important to help your group answer this honestly. The point, again, isn't a right answer, but the honest truth form each of your group members' experiences.)
- **Question:** How do the thoughts and feelings we experience when Jesus comes to mind impact our relationship with Him? How do they impact our lives in general?

- **(Leader Note:** Clearly our image of Jesus will impact the nature of our relationship with Him. And if He is a big part of our lives, our lives will be impacted, too.)
- **Question:** When we recognize Jesus' willingness to forgive us, how should that change the image we have of ourselves?
- **Question:** When we understand Jesus' willingness to forgive everyone, how should that change the image we have of people in general?
  - **(Leader Note:** Feel free to naturally move to prayer time with the next question)
- **Prayer Question:** Is there anything in your life you need forgiveness for? How can we listen and pray for you to point you to Jesus' willingness to forgive?

## WRAP UP:

- When we understand how forgiven we are, it changes everything. We should still trust Jesus' ability to heal, but that shouldn't take precedence to His willingness to forgive our greatest need: our sin. When we understand who Jesus truly is, we'll be willing to bring anything to Him. So these questions remain: Is Jesus worth following? And if so, will we? We'll continue to embrace those questions as we move forward through the Gospel of Mark.

## RESPOND/PRAYER: (15 MIN)

- **Prompt:** Who did you B.L.E.S.S. this week? **(refer to the cheat sheet on the last page of this discussion guide).**
- **Prompt:** Pray that God would open our eyes to see the people who He wants us to B.L.E.S.S. where we live work and play.
- **Prompt:** Spend time sharing prayer requests.

# FIRST Groups B.L.E.S.S. Updates

At FIRST, *our groups exist to help us grow in our relationship with God and each other.* But for what? Why does God want us to grow? We are convicted that God wants to use the strength and community of our groups, to bless the people where we live work and play. Especially the people we know who do not have a relationship with God. This is how we'll fulfill the Jesus Mission to "go and make disciples" (Matt 28-18-20).

As groups, **we want to intentionally "B.L.E.S.S." people each week.**<sup>1</sup> *What do we mean by that?*

**B - Begin with prayer:** We will pray for the people where we live work and play.

**L - Listen:** We will intentionally listen to the people in our lives where we live work and play.

**E - Eat:** We will share meals with the people where we live work and play.

**S - Serve:** We will respond to the needs we discover among the people where we live, work, and play.

**S - Story:** We will share the story of Jesus and what He is doing in our lives with the people where we live work and play.

## So in your group:

- *Start every prayer time by asking, "who did you B.L.E.S.S. this week?"*
- Write down what each of your group members say, and follow up week by week.
- **ENCOURAGE:** This is not meant to shame, but to empower us to take intentional steps to be a blessing. If all else fails, you can encourage timid or nervous group members to start by intentionally praying for God to open doors for them to be a blessing (Colossians 4:2-3)
- Continue to share personal prayer requests and praises.

This subtle shift in times of prayer can lead to a massive impact over time. Thanks for helping your group grow and be a blessing!

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<sup>1</sup> This B.L.E.S.S. acronym was originally developed as a church resource by Dave Ferguson.

[https://smile.amazon.com/Discover-Your-Mission-Dave-Ferguson/dp/0983086486/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539805578&sr=8-1&keywords=discover+your+mission+now](https://smile.amazon.com/Discover-Your-Mission-Dave-Ferguson/dp/0983086486/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539805578&sr=8-1&keywords=discover+your+mission+now)