



Pointers and questions on the Gospel of

MARK

Session 2

3:1 - 4:20

Summary

- 3:1-19** With his miracles stirring up controversy with the religious authorities, Jesus withdraws, only to be pursued by the crowds. He formalises the appointment of the Twelve.
- 3:20-34** Jesus comes under criticism not only from the teachers of the law but also from his family—his mother Mary and his half-brothers.
- 4:1-20** The Parable of the Sower and its interpretation.

Questions to get you thinking

1. What does 3:1-6 tell us about the attitude of Jesus' opponents? Are *you* liable to slip into such negative attitudes sometimes? And what does the same passage tell us about Jesus' emotional life?
2. Jesus, the ultimate spiritual man, was at the same time a highly practical person. How is this demonstrated in 3:7-12? How practical is your own spirituality?
3. According to 3:13-19, for what three reasons did Jesus appoint the Twelve? What was the primary reason—the one mentioned first?
4. Why, out of all the potential disciples, do you think Jesus chose *twelve* rather than, say, ten or fourteen?
5. Look at the names of the Twelve (3:16-19). What do you know about the character of some of them? How does this illustrate the fact that Jesus chooses followers with a wide variety of personalities?
6. What, according to 3:22-30, is the unforgivable sin?
7. What does 3:31-35 tell you about Jesus' relationship with his natural family? Does his comment in v33 mean that he had no interest in them? If you yourself come from a non-Christian family, would you agree with Jesus' implication in 3:34 that, in a very real way, Christian 'brothers and sisters' can be closer than unsaved blood relatives?
8. In the Parable of the Sower (4:1-9) Jesus was using an illustration from the everyday life of that agricultural society. What illustrations do you think he might have used had he been around in our country today?
9. Talk about the four places where seeds land in the Parable of the Sower (4:1-9), and the four kinds of hearers they represent in Jesus' interpretation of it (4:13-20). Tell the group about people you have known in each category.
10. Does the parable suggest that, out of all those who hear God's word, we can expect only one in four to bear fruit?
11. Look at 4:10-12. What do you think Jesus is saying here about the parables he told and their impact on the people who heard them?
12. Ask yourself some practical questions: Am I a regular sower of the gospel seed, witnessing faithfully? Do I expect to see fruit from my seed-sowing?

