

## **Nearer Than You Think Disturbing Mark 1:38-45**

### **Introduction:**

Jesus ignored certain religious protocols. He claimed to have authority to forgive sin. He was uncomfortably comfortable with unrepentant sinners. Jesus came to reverse the order of things.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. When you hear the term “faith” in a religious context, what do you assume it means?
  
2. Read Mark 2:2–5.
  - What stands out to you?
  - What might have been going through the minds of the people in these verses?
  - How do the friends, the paralyzed man and Jesus) play a part in this healing?
  - What did Jesus see that he equated with faith?
  
3. We’ve all had unanswered prayers. Have you ever been blamed or blamed yourself for not having enough faith?
  
4. Read Mark 1:38–45.
  - What stands out to you?
  - Why might the leper be unsure of Jesus’ willingness to heal him?
  - Why was leprosy such an awful disease (See Leviticus 13:1-46)
  - Look at verses 39–40. How much faith did the leper have? Apparently, it was enough.
  - What is significant about the way Jesus healed him?
  - How has Jesus made his compassion tangible to you?
  
5. Read Mark 2:13–14.
  - What stands out to you?
  - Given that Levi was probably viewed as corrupt, how would Jesus’s inner circle have felt when Jesus invited Levi into their group?
  - What lessons can we learn from Jesus’s invitation to Levi?
  - How have you responded to Jesus’s call to come and follow up?

### **Keeping in Step**

Jesus demonstrated and said that God accepts sinners and invites them into a new kind of kingdom. As a result, Jesus followers were faced with a choice: Do we walk away and save our reputation, or do we repent and believe the good news? Mark, documenting Peter's experience with Jesus, tells us that this new way would continue to collide with Peter’s way. He would have to face fear, insecurity, and prejudice head-on. We must do the same. The kingdom of God is near, and everyone is invited to participate.