



Cuyahoga
Valley Church

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

Week of 10.26.25

Mark 2:13-17 // Joe Valenti

Please take the opportunity to revisit the CVC Equip
Portrait of a Healthy LifeGroup on a regular basis

CONNECT (10 MIN)

- ① What is one thing in the sermon that especially stood out to or resonated with you this week?

EXPLORE (30 MIN)

Create Context (5 min):

HERE is the Sermon Recap video playlist on Vimeo, which includes the recap video from this week.

Study & Discussion (25 min)

Read Mark 2:13-17.

- ② On Sunday, Pastor Joe opened his sermon with a parable about three different Christians, all living in the same imaginary city, and all seeking to live out their faith in a specific way - each one unintentionally overemphasizing one aspect of living in, but not of, the world. Joe used the image of a light shining into the world (see Matthew 5:14-16) to portray the way in which each person in this parable sought to share and live out the gospel.

1. Elaina - She removed herself from the world, recognizing its sinfulness and wanting to protect herself and her family from it. But her light that shone out into the world was, as Pastor Joe put it, "so far away from the darkness, that her light never reached it."
2. Marcus - He thought that "if you want to reach people, you've got to be like them!" But Marcus "rarely talked about Jesus." Marcus did all the same things that the lost people around Him did. "Over time, the light that he was supposed to carry didn't seem to be there at all."
3. Jonah - He wanted to share his right answers about Jesus boldly and without fear. "But when he looked at the world he didn't see people - he saw enemies." Jonah posted on Facebook, marched in protests and called out sin - "Jonah loved confrontation, and he called it courage because that sounded more Christian-y. He didn't realize that his light meant to shine in dark places was actually burning bridges."

Pastor Joe invited us to consider - which one of these people sounds like us? He shared that he thinks he has probably been all of these characters at different times in his life.

- Which person's story in this parable resonates with you because you see yourself in this character?

(Questions relating to this parable continue on the next page)

- Do you know someone who reminds you of one of these characters? Without sharing names - what about this person reminds you of someone in the parable?
 - Why do you think it can be so easy for Christians to run to one of these extremes when trying to “let our lights shine”?
- ③ Joe shared in his sermon on Sunday that in his life and ministry, Jesus was always ready to meet anyone around Him with kindness and compassion - AND, at the same time, Jesus was never shy about his mission to the world (see Mark 2:17).
- How can we learn from the example of Jesus as we seek to share the gospel with our actions AND our words with the people that He has sovereignly placed in our lives (in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our work and/or our schools)?
 - What do you think we can do to help one another, and grow ourselves, in finding the balance between running away from, becoming just like, or being overly confrontational with, the culture around us as we seek to share the gospel in deed and word?
- ④ Read John 3:16-17. Next, read 1 John 15-17. Reading these two passages back to back helps us capture a tension that we see throughout Scripture. God loves the world, and created every person in the world, and desires that all might come to know Him (see 1 Timothy 2:3-4). At the same time, “love of the world” is a phrase used in Scripture to talk about a kind of enchantment with worldly things and worldly pleasures that is unhealthy and undesirable for someone who is forgiven and led by Jesus.
- How would you explain these two ideas (that 1) God loves the world, and 2) love of the world can be a stumbling block for Christians) to a new follower of Jesus?
 - It’s one thing to understand these concepts, and it’s another thing to live them out. Where do you think you have room to grow in seeking to look at and love the world like God does? Where do you think you have room to grow in seeking to love the things of this world less?
- ⑤ Pastor Joe asked us on Sunday, “In what ways might you need Jesus to transform you in order to share his love and message with more effectiveness?” Take a moment to reflect on this, and share with one another in your LifeGroup.

- ⑥ As we think about these ideas we've discussed in this study guide, and that we heard in the service on Sunday, and that we encounter in our text for this week - how do we, as Pastor Joe put it consider the difference between behavior modification and heart transformation? What does it look like to submit to the Holy Spirit and ask God to do the work in our hearts so that we become more like Him?

PRAY AND APPLY

- Pray that Jesus would draw sinners to Himself.

Ask that those who feel unworthy, unwanted, or far from God would hear the voice of Jesus calling, "Follow Me," and respond in faith like Levi – leaving behind their old life for a new one in Christ.

- Pray for humility in the hearts of the "righteous."

Intercede for those who may, like the Pharisees, trust in their goodness or look down on others. Pray that God would soften self-righteous hearts and help each person in the room recognize their own need for the Great Physician.

- Pray for Pastor Joe and Pastor Josh to proclaim Jesus' mission clearly.

Ask that the message would reveal Jesus not as one who avoids sinners or approves of sin, but as the Redeemer who steps into darkness to bring light – the One whose holiness heals rather than withdraws.

- Pray for CVC to reflect Jesus' heart in our city.

Pray that we would be a community marked by both holiness and compassion – people who live set apart from sin yet deeply engaged with the lost. Ask God to make the church a table where both the obviously sinful and the quietly indifferent can encounter grace and truth.

- Pray for courage and discernment in gospel relationships.

Pray that we would have the wisdom to know how to engage unbelievers well – not retreating in fear, not compromising truth, but entering relationships intentionally for the sake of the gospel. Ask that God would give divine appointments this week for gospel conversations.

RESOURCES

1. The Gospel Coalition Course - Knowing the Bible: Mark
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/knowning-bible-mark/>

2. Jesus, Friend of Sinners: But How? - Kevin DeYoung
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/jesus-friend-of-sinners-but-how/>



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WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week of 10.26.25

Please take a moment to share
these announcements with your group.

NIGHT OF PRAYER

Night of Prayer: November 5

Join us for a Night of Prayer on November 5 as we seek God together, guided by James 5. We will begin by praying for the lost, remembering that while Jesus cares about all suffering, He cares most about eternal suffering. Next, we will pray for the strength to learn to suffer well, relying on God's wisdom and presence in every season. Finally, we will lift up the sick, trusting in God's power to heal—sometimes immediately, sometimes gradually, and sometimes fully in eternity. This will be a powerful night of intercession, reflection, and unity as we lift our hearts to God

INVITE

Widows/Widowers Luncheon with CVC Staff: November 18

Our CVC staff will be hosting a luncheon for anyone in our church family who has lost a spouse – whether recently or many years ago. This will be a time to enjoy a meal together, find encouragement, and connect with others who understand that kind of loss. If you are a widow or widower, we would love for you to join us. You can [sign up HERE](#). And even if you're not able to attend the luncheon, we'd still love to know who you are, so that we can stay in touch, care for you, and walk with you in meaningful ways.

CVC YOUTH

High School Fall Retreat: November 21

Escape the noise, slow down, and press in—Fall Retreat is here. Three days away with your friends and leaders, incredible worship, and teaching that will challenge and encourage you. This is the weekend you'll look back on all year—don't miss it. More details will be released as we get closer to the event!

SEND

Disaster Relief Trip – North Carolina: December 3

Found out more about how to give or go [using this link](#)! Registration ends November 21.