

The Bystanders — a readers' theater from Mark 2

By Kathy Applebee

CHARACTERS: 9, Bystander 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Jesus, TOL (teacher of the law) 1, 2, 3

SETTING: Israel, time of Christ

RUN TIME: 6 minutes, 4 scenes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Mark 2

Scene 1 - Jesus Heals a Paralytic

BYSTANDER 1: I wonder what happened when Jesus again entered Capernaum and the people heard that he had come home?

BYSTANDER 2: I can tell you. So many gathered that there was no room left,

BYSTANDER 3: Not even outside the door,

BYSTANDER 4: Jesus preached the word to them.

BYSTANDER 2: Some men came, bringing a paralytic to Jesus.

BYSTANDER 3: There were four of them. But they couldn't get him to Jesus because of the crowd

BYSTANDER 2: So they dug an opening in the roof above Jesus.

BYSTANDER 1: (*Finding it incredible*) They dug a hole in somebody's roof?

BYSTANDER 4: They sure did.

BYSTANDER 3: Then they lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on down into the house.

BYSTANDER 4: Meanwhile, inside the home....

BYSTANDER 5: When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic....

JESUS: Son, your sins are forgiven.

BYSTANDER 5: Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves,

TOL 3: Why does this fellow talk like that?

TOL 1: He's blaspheming!

TOL 2: Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

BYSTANDER 5: Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them...

JESUS: Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (*to man*) I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.

BYSTANDER 5: The paralytic is got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

BYSTANDER 1: This is amazing! Praise God!

BYSTANDER 2: We have never seen anything like this!

The Calling of Levi

BYSTANDER 2: Once again, Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.

BYSTANDER 3: As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth.

BYSTANDER 5: Don't some people call him Matthew?

BYSTANDER 2: Yes, that's the one.

JESUS: Follow me.

BYSTANDER 2: Levi got up and followed him.

BYSTANDER 3: While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

TOL 1: Look, this Jesus is eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors.

TOL 2: Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?

JESUS: It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

BYSTANDER 5: Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.

TOL 3: How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?

JESUS: How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day, they will fast.

BYSTANDER 2: I wonder who the bridegroom is?

JESUS: No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.

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BYSTANDER 3: That is sure true.

BYSTANDER 4: It has happened to me.

JESUS: And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.

Lord of the Sabbath

BYSTANDER 4: One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields,

BYSTANDER 5: As his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.

TOL 2: Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?

JESUS: Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.

BYSTANDER 1: That's true. I remember that story from the Bible.

JESUS: The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Making Analogies

CHARACTERS: 10 , Modern day kids: Josh, Mulan, Terry, Pedro, April, Khloe, Connor

Biblical Alexander the priest and Jesus

SETTING: Israel, time of Christ and today

RUN TIME: 3 minutes,

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Mark 2

Jesus Questioned About Fasting from Mark 2

Before you read: Jesus makes three analogies here to help people understand the kingdom of God. As you read think of three modern day analogies that could be made that would resonate with a modern audience. Think about the connections and analogy the kids make. Then create your own modern day version of this passage with your three analogies.

CONNOR: Let's start reading in Mark 2, verse 18.

JOSH: John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.

APRIL: Some people came and asked Jesus about it.

ALEXANDER: (*haughty*) How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?

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JESUS: How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them.

PEDRO: That was true back in the day.

MULAN: A wedding meant a feast. Kind of like going to a modern day reception after the wedding ceremony.

JESUS: But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

JOSH: Then Jesus made another analogy.

JESUS: No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.

APRIL: I know why that would happen.

KHLOE: Tell us.

APRIL: Cloth especially cotton, shrinks after you wash it for the first time.

CONNOR: So does wool. My little sister accidentally put her wool sweater in the wash once.

TERRY: What happened?

CONNOR: It shrank so much it became doll clothes.

KHLOE: So what about fabric?

APRIL: I had embroidered a patch and sewed it on a jacket. Next time the jacket was washed the patch shrank and pulled off the jacket.

MULAN: Was it ruined?

APRIL: Yes, but the jacket was Ok because jean material is tough.

PEDRO: Let's move on from the sewing lesson.

JOSH: Really.

KHLOE: True again. Start reading at verse 22.

JESUS: And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.

MULAN: Wine is fermented grape juice. It can expand a container unless its glass or something hard like that.

TERRY: What were wineskins made out of?

PEDRO: Animal skins. Think of thin leather.

CONNOR: Once my brother tried to put hot tea in a paper cup. It melted the wax coating and burned his fingers.

TERRY: (*emphasizing “old” and “ancient”*) This reminds me of trying to run a new video game on my aunt’s old, old, I mean ancient, computer. It locked up the computer.

KHLOE: Probably didn’t have enough free RAM or something.

CONNOR: Or the graphics card was too old.

TERRY: You need a newer computer for newer games.

APRIL: So is Jesus saying you can’t fix the old law?

PEDRO: I think so.

MULAN: You needed a totally new heart for Jesus’ teaching.

JOSH: Something born again.

CONNOR: Later on in the book of Acts, Paul talks about having to be a new creation. You couldn’t be saved by the old law.

JOSH: You could only be saved by Jesus.

For Further Discussion:

Think about the bridegroom – someone you wait for to start a party. Who would you choose for a modern analogy? What would the occasion be? (Hint: a birthday party or an anniversary)

Think of a dish you might make for dinner that somehow was ruined, maybe burned. What could you add to it to try to fix it, but only waste more of the new ingredient? (Hint: Trying to fix a burnt cake by covering it with frosting or putting butter on burned popcorn)

Think of a container that could be ruined by putting the wrong substance in it. What would the substance be? What kind of container?