

2026-08-02 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide

Based on the Sermon: "Who Is Your Anchorman?"

Series: Tug of War

Overview

This sermon draws from the Gospel of Mark to explore what it means to have Jesus as the anchor of our lives. Through a series of encounters — Jesus casting out a demon, healing Peter's mother-in-law, healing a leper, and restoring a paralyzed man — we see that Jesus has authority over sickness, spiritual forces, and sin itself. The central challenge is this: are we treating Christianity as a passive club membership, or are we actively anchoring ourselves to Christ in the daily tug of war between our desires, our fears, and God's call to holiness?

Key Takeaways

Peter's instruction in 1 Peter 1:13 calls believers to prepare their minds for action, be self-controlled, and pursue holiness — not passive comfort.

Jesus demonstrated authority in four areas in rapid succession in Mark 1 and 2: teaching, spiritual warfare, physical healing, and the forgiveness of sins.

The demon in the synagogue recognized Jesus immediately and feared destruction. Even the enemy knows who Jesus is — the question is whether we live like we do.

When Jesus forgave the paralyzed man's sins before healing his body, he was making a theological statement: the deeper human need is not physical restoration but spiritual restoration.

Jesus knew the thoughts of the religious leaders without being told. He knows our thoughts as well — not to condemn us, but because he knows we need him.

The posture of giving rather than getting transforms our experience of worship, community, and service.

Holiness is not surface-level performance. It is who we are entirely — shaped by the Holy Spirit working from the inside out.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Go around the group and answer this: When you think of the word "anchor," what comes to mind? What or who tends to anchor you when life gets turbulent?

Section 1: Preparing for Action

The sermon referenced 1 Peter 1:13, where Peter urges believers to prepare their minds for action, be self-controlled, and pursue holiness.

Be honest with yourself and the group: do you tend to treat your faith as something active or something passive? What does that look like practically in your week?

The sermon suggests that the moment we declare Jesus as Lord, we enter into a spiritual conflict rather than exit one. Has that matched your experience? How did your life change — or get more complicated — after you came to faith?

Peter wrote that we should not conform to the evil desires we once lived by in ignorance. What does it look like to actively resist slipping back into old patterns, especially when life gets hard or boring?

Section 2: The Authority of Jesus

The sermon walked through several stories from Mark 1 and 2, each demonstrating a different dimension of Jesus's authority.

In Mark 1:22, the crowd was amazed because Jesus taught with authority, not like the teachers of the law. What is the difference between someone who teaches with authority and someone who simply repeats information? How does that distinction affect how you receive teaching?

The demon in the synagogue knew exactly who Jesus was and feared him. Meanwhile, the religious leaders in chapter 2 questioned whether he had any authority at all. What does it say about us spiritually when we intellectually acknowledge who Jesus is but practically live as though he has limited authority over our lives?

Jesus healed many different diseases and cast out many demons in a single evening in Capernaum. He was not afraid of the leper. He was not put off by the crowd. What does his willingness to engage with messy, difficult, and socially unacceptable situations tell us about his character?

Section 3: Forgiveness and the Deeper Need

The paralyzed man's story in Mark 2 is the theological center of the sermon.

When Jesus said "your sins are forgiven" before healing the man's paralysis, the four friends who carried him there were probably confused. Have you ever brought a specific need to God and felt like he addressed something else entirely — something deeper? What was that like?

The sermon raises this question: which is easier to say, "your sins are forgiven" or "get up and walk"? Jesus used the visible miracle to prove his authority to do the invisible one. How does that shape the way you think about miracles and the forgiveness of sins? Which do you find yourself trusting more readily?

The religious leaders thought to themselves that only God can forgive sins. Jesus heard their thoughts and used that very logic to point to who he was. If Jesus can read our thoughts right now, what do you think he is observing most consistently in yours? Is that a comforting thought or an

uncomfortable one — and why?

Section 4: Giving vs. Getting

The sermon made a strong challenge about the posture we bring to worship and community.

The sermon drew a contrast between coming to church to get something and coming to give something. How does that shift in posture change the experience of worship, community, and even the hard parts of following Jesus?

The pastor shared that every time he obeyed God in something that did not make sense and cost more than he wanted to pay, he has yet to be let down — though sometimes it took years to see why. Has that been true in your experience? Share an example if you are comfortable doing so.

Jesus said he did not come to be served but to serve. How does that shape your understanding of what it means to follow him? Where in your life right now is there an opportunity to serve someone at personal cost?

Practical Applications

Choose one of the following to practice individually before your group meets again:

PREPARE YOUR MIND. Before next Sunday, spend time on Saturday evening asking God to prepare you to give rather than get. Come to worship with a specific person in mind that you intend to encourage, serve, or pray for.

IDENTIFY THE ROPE. In the tug of war of your daily life, identify one specific area where you feel pulled away from Christ. Write it down. Bring it to God in prayer each morning this week and ask him to be your anchor in that specific place.

EXAMINE YOUR THOUGHTS. Spend five minutes in quiet each day this week and ask honestly: if Jesus is reading my thoughts right now, what is he seeing? Bring whatever surfaces to him in prayer — not in shame, but in honesty.

COUNT THE COST. Is there something God has been asking you to lay down so you can pick something else up? Name it. Talk to a trusted person in your group about it. Take one concrete step toward obedience this week.

SERVE WITHOUT BEING ASKED. Identify one act of service you can do this week for someone who cannot repay you and who may not even know it was you. Do it without announcing it.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these three things:

That each person would anchor themselves more deeply to Christ in the specific area of struggle they identified tonight.

That the group would grow in genuine holiness — not performance, but character shaped by the Holy Spirit from the inside out.

That anyone in the group or in their circles who has not yet come to Christ for the forgiveness of sins would take that step.

"We don't have to grieve like the rest of the world that has no hope." —
From the sermon