

## Episode 2: Shabbat

**While you watch:** As you watch this episode, mark off each person and the main events that happen in the show. This will help to keep your focus so you can pay close attention to each character that is introduced.

### Characters:

- Mary
- Simon
- Andrew
- Nicodemus
- Eden
- Matthew
- Quintus
- Barnaby
- Shula
- James & Thaddeaus
- Jesus

### Events:

- Mary is well with no demons tormenting her
- Matthew talks to Quintus about Simon
- Simon is at the bar
- Eden and Simon are at home
- Mary hosts Shabbat dinner
- Jesus arrives at the dinner

**Reflect on the episode:** The episode opens up with a flash back to Chinnereth in 948 BC. The family is celebrating Shabbat and the mother is explaining to her son, Eli, that they celebrate Shabbat to celebrate family, people and most importantly God.

In this episode, we see four different Shabbat dinners occurring with events leading up to their dinner. Let's go through each dinner, who the participants were and what is going on with our lead characters. In Exodus, God tells the Israelites to remember the Sabbath. Read through the scripture below and circle what you are to do on the Sabbath.

- **Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV)** – <sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

**Mary** - The episode opens up in 26 AD in Capernaum. Mary is well and no longer possessed by seven demons. Praise the Lord! Yusuf sees Mary is healed and tells the Jewish leaders. Nicodemus gets word that she is healed and can't believe it; it must have been a miracle. Mary is going about her day with a new outlook on life. She is happy, helping others, looking forward to the future because she is healed. Have you ever undergone an experience that gave you a new, refreshed outlook on life? Was it a near death experience or some magnificent turn of luck that left you full instead of empty? Reflect and praise God below.

Mary is preparing for hosting her first Shabbat dinner. She is excited, but also nervous about the dinner. How do you feel about hosting events or big dinners?

We will revisit Mary's dinner at the end the reflection questions.

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*Jewish people celebrate Shabbat, the Sabbath day on Saturday. We celebrate the Sabbath, a day of rest, on Sunday as that this when Jesus rose from the grave.*

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**Matthew** – The last we saw Matthew in episode 1, he couldn't believe that Simon and Andrew's tax debt was forgiven and wanted to verify it with Quintus. Gaius takes Matthew to Quintus to verify that their debt is forgiven, but warns Quintus that he doesn't think Simon will deliver on his word.

Matthew is a tax collector and they are not very popular people. The Jewish people hate the tax collectors as they think they are traitors as they assist the Romans in suppressing heavy taxes on the people. Oftentimes too, the tax collectors would overtax the people and pocket the extra, effectively stealing from their own people. The Romans did not like the tax collectors because they were Jews. As Matthew goes about his day he is enduring slander from the Jews and physical pushing and threats from the Romans.

Unfortunately, Matthew does not go to a Shabbat dinner. It seems like he wants to celebrate Shabbat, but has no where to enjoy the dinner. He has betrayed his family by going into the tax profession and no one, neither Jew nor Roman wants to be seen with him. He almost went to dinner with a family, but never actually knocks on the door. Matthew doesn't know he will be rejected, he just assumes. Have you ever been in a situation where you were too scared to actually knock? Have you not taken an opportunity due to fear? Or have you knocked, taken an opportunity when you were scared and it paid off?

Instead of knocking, Matthew befriends a dog and goes home. Is there anyone you know who is considered an outcast or might be different from others so they are avoided? What can you do to help them feel included? Do you need to forgive them, look past their flaws and accept them?

**Simon** – Another character that doesn't fully get to celebrate Shabbat is Simon. Simon has gotten himself into a pickle where he needs to deliver the merchant fishermen who are fishing on the Sabbath or he will be in big trouble with the Roman officers. He attempts to butter up the fishermen at the bar to understand who is fishing on the Sabbath and then ends up having to leave the Shabbat dinner to catch the fisherman in the act.

Eden, Simon's wife, knows that something is wrong with Simon, but she doesn't know the full extent. Andrew is mad at Simon for betraying his fellow Jews and ratting them out to the Romans. Simon knows what he is doing is wrong, but he is justifying it by saying the merchant fisherman are taking the fish out of the sea so he and Andrew cannot fish. It is then taking food off his family's plate so what he is doing is

actually good. There are definitely flaws in his thinking and he doesn't convince Andrew. Have you ever justified something you knew was wrong just so you could still do it?

**Nicodemus** – Nicodemus is so surprised to hear that Mary is healed. He didn't think his exorcism was effective, but doesn't know how else she could have been healed. He asks the Jewish leaders to

investigate for himself, finds Mary, sees with his own eyes that she is healed

## Bible Reference

When Nicodemus and his wife are looking at the tapestry that was hanging before dinner, Nicodemus tells her a little about the Maccabees. There are a couple of books that a Catholic bible has that is not found in any Protestant bible (ESV, NIV, NLT, KJV, etc.) and 1 & 2 Maccabees are two of those books.

Nicodemus explains that in about 200 BC the Greek ruler Antiochus IV suppressed the Jews and their faith. When the Maccabees revolted it welcomed in the Hasmonean dynasty and restored the Jewish ability to worship.

I bet after not being able to worship, you feel so much joy when you finally can! I remember going to a Mercy Me concert after COVID was over and being so filled with joy! I could finally be surrounded by thousands of believers singing at the top of my lungs, praising the Lord, and that was only after 6 months to a year of limiting big crowds. I can only imagine their joy after being suppressed for much longer.

### **DID YOU KNOW??**

It was during the Maccabean wars that Hanukkah came about. God gave them a miracle of the oil burning for eight days symbolizing light overcoming darkness and religious freedom.

him it was not him who healed her, but another man for whom she did not know his name as he did not want to take credit for the healing. Nicodemus is floored, why would someone heal Mary and not want the credit?

Nicodemus' mind is consumed with finding out who healed Mary from the seven demons. He can't focus on the Shabbat dinner he attends. Do you ever find yourself distracted in your faith? Confess to God the areas you have allowed distractions to divert your attention from him.

Let's get back to Mary's dinner!

Once Mary has prepared her dinner, she gets a few knocks on the door. The first is her friend Barnaby who is crippled. Then Shula who is blind. Both of these attendees have not been invited to a Shabbat dinner in many years. The third knock is James and Thaddaeus who Mary didn't even know, but they explained they were told to come to the dinner. The last and final knock was Jesus himself!

Despite how you answered the first question about hosting events/ dinners, how would you feel if you were hosting Jesus Christ himself?

The main characters in this episode experienced very different Sabbaths. Circle below which Sabbath you feel like you have been experiencing lately?

1. Mary – Are you excited about your faith right now. Willing to go all in, even if it is doing things that are out of your comfort zone or make you nervous?
2. Matthew – Have you skipped the Sabbath and are skipping out on growing in your faith because you feel rejected or not accepted by God?
3. Simon – Are you willing to do enough to get by in your faith, but not all that you should or could? Are you more consumed by material and worldly things and it is pulling you away from truly growing in your faith?
4. Nicodemus – Are you distracted in your faith right now and consumed with other activities? Have you not celebrated the Sabbath because you are prioritizing other things?

God calls us to not only rest on the Sabbath, but to grow in our faith. We should be like Mary and be excited and joyful to share our faith with others. Don't be scared to get out of your comfort zone or to say no to activities that are diverting your attention away from God. God rested on the seventh day, and we need to as well. Pull your mind away from the world and all the lies it tells you. Remove those distractions and celebrate the Sabbath and rest in God's peace.

Since God calls us to rest on the Sabbath, what can you do to better celebrate the Sabbath and focus on Him? Think of a couple of actions that you can take and commit to them this Sunday.

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*Barnaby says to Jesus, "Something good came out of Nazareth?". Nazareth is looked down on as a town and people will continually be surprised that Jesus is from Nazareth. This is specifically mentioned in John 1:46 by Nathanael before he becomes a disciple. "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"*

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