

Discussion Guide

Week of September 23, 2012

Mark 2:13-17

Passage Overview

Mark frequently presents a series of stories linked by a common theme and these often overlap. The healing of the paralytic (2:1-12) shows us the authority of Jesus to forgive sins, but it also begins a series of stories in which religious leaders oppose Jesus. This opposition grows over time. At first, they only think it to themselves (2:6). Then they ask the disciples (2:16). Then they ask Jesus about the disciples (2:18, 24). Finally, they plot to kill Jesus (3:6). Each story helps to explain who Jesus is and why he has come. In 2:1-3:35, we see Jesus being rejected by the religious leaders of Israel. In response, Jesus chooses twelve apostles to be the beginning of a new community. Specifically, in 2:13-17, we see Jesus' calling of Levi the tax collector.

Understand God's Word—Read Mark 2:13-17.

- What do Jesus' actions show us about God? Why do the Pharisees find this so disturbing?
- What do the terms "sinners" and "righteous" mean as used in these verses? How is this unexpected and surprising? What is Jesus teaching here? *Note: When Jesus says that he is not for the "righteous" (v17), he does not mean that some people don't need him. Rather, he is slamming those who are self-righteous.*

Live and Apply God's Word

- How do Levi and his calling compare with the earlier disciples and their calling (see 1:16-17)? What does this teach us about Jesus? About us?
- Jesus' compassion is counter-intuitive. Jesus' salvation by sheer grace breaks the world's molds and patterns. Reflect on the following surprises we see in this text. According to this passage how should we live and think now?
 - **Jesus had no built in prejudices.** He saw all people as "sick," but the "sinners" who know they need a doctor are closer to the kingdom than the "righteous" who don't know they are sinners.
 - **Jesus is only available to people who know they are moral failures.**
 - **As a physician, Jesus not only teaches us how to live. He puts his hands on us, gives us power, the Holy Spirit, the new birth.** Other religions only give us teachers who tell us what to do.
 - **Jesus' forgiveness really changes us.** Levi immediately brings his friends to Jesus (v15), already helping and caring for his friends.

Turn to God in Faith and Repentance

- How much contact do you have with "sinners"? What is your attitude towards them? How can you become more like Jesus in his compassion for sinners?
- The moral and religious are often the least interested in *real* Christianity (once it is explained to them). On the other hand, the big "sinners" are often the most interested in *real* Christianity (once it is explained to them). How does this give you hope for the big "sinners" in your life?

Pray

Thank God that no one is too sinful for Jesus to show compassion. Pray for boldness to share this compassion with those who are far from Jesus. Pray for Paul Tokunaga as he serves with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Announcements

- Men's Fall Cookout (Oct. 13; \$10) (*Sign up: Jim Money, jmoney1960@yahoo.com*)
- Deacon Candidate Q&A (Oct. 17)
- Lunch on the Grounds (Oct. 28; \$5) (*Tickets on sale soon!*)