

## 1. Text/Passage

Mark 2:13-17

### **Jesus Calls Levi**

<sup>13</sup> He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. <sup>14</sup> And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

<sup>15</sup> And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> And the scribes of<sup>[a]</sup> the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat<sup>[b]</sup> with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>17</sup> And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

## 2. Observations

- a. I am fascinated by Jesus' compassion for outcasts, sinners and people on the fringe of society. I'm equally astounded by the confidence he has in his actions and his words. He does what love does and meets people where they are in the midst of their situation, whether it is sin, sickness, loneliness or hatred from others.
- b. I admire Jesus' confidence in dealing with the religious leaders. He doesn't back down from them in anyway. He often uses scripture and in this case in Mark he uses an old proverb to make his point regarding why he came; "to call sinners."
- c. Jesus is setting the stage for why he came. Who he spent his time with said much about his purpose in bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. His calling of a hated tax collector and partying with sinners set the tone for the rest of his ministry.
- d. This passage also tells us much of the pharisees. Being the first time, they are mentioned in Mark, we learn of their opposition to Jesus, his followers and their actions. Their role in Jesus' ministry is just beginning and ultimately leads to his arrest, sentencing and crucifixion.

## 3. Interpretation

- a. One of Mark's primary goals is to establish the authority and messianic status of Jesus. We see from Jesus' invitation to Levi, that Jesus carries with him the necessary influence to draw people to himself.
- b. The call of Levi and others also validate Mark's desire to highlight the importance of discipleship. Jesus took his followers many

places (including parties) to show them how to bring God's Kingdom to earth and how and who to interact with and love.

- c. The theme of tending to the sick (sinners) is a running theme through the entire bible. For example Isaiah 61 in the OT and through the gospels and into Acts and the Epistles, we know that Jesus is about transformation over separation. He challenges the religious leaders because they are all about the latter. The transformation theme through love has a running thread all through scripture. Jesus highlights this in this text as a testimony for the world to see.

#### 4. Application(s)

- a. Jesus is the reflection of God the Father in Heaven. He only does and says what the Father says. God is Love and he loves every human. God is especially fond of the outcast, the sinner, the forgotten, the sick. His ministry is proof of this as he spends much of his time with these types of people. This is of particular interest to me because this is where I believe the church should be focused...spending much of its time serving and loving the lost.
- b. Strauss highlights many thematic applications in his commentary on Mark. I'd like to provide some application around these themes below.
  - i. "God loves all people, regardless of social status or lot in life".
  - ii. "God's salvation is offered freely to all who respond in faith".
  - iii. God chooses the lowly and foolish things of this world to accomplish his purposes".
  - iv. "The Danger of pride in human accomplishment".