

The Gospel of Mark: “The Company He Keeps”
Mark 2:13-17

What Jesus shows us about Himself

- Jesus called Levi, a tax collector, to follow Him. (vv. 13-14)
 - Levi (also known as Matthew) immediately obeyed Jesus.
 - Jesus is not begging us to make a little bit of room for him in our lives.
 - Jesus is calling us to radical discipleship.
 - Tax collectors were notoriously corrupt and considered traitorous.
 - It’s one thing to build a kingdom around the unskilled.
 - It’s quite a different thing to build a kingdom around the unrighteous.
- Levi attracted other Levis to Jesus. (vv. 15-17)
 - The scribes were experts in the Law, and the Pharisees were a group committed to the holiness among the people of God.
 - The Pharisees found fault with Jesus’ social interaction with sinners.
 - Jesus was unbothered by their objections.

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.” (2:17)

What Jesus calls us to today

- Be amazed at the great mercy of the King.

The Lord Jesus came into the world to be a physician as well as a teacher. He knew the necessities of human nature. He saw us all sick of a mortal disease, stricken with the plague of sin, and dying daily. He pitied us and came down to bring divine medicine for our relief. He came to give health and cure to the dying, to heal the broken hearted, and to offer strength to the weak. No sin-sick soul is too far gone for Him. It is His glory to heal and restore to life the most desperate cases. For unfailing skill, for unwearied tenderness, for long experience of man’s spiritual ailments, the great Physician of souls stands alone. There is none like Him. (J.C. Ryle)

- Before you think of sinners beyond you, think of Jesus *for you*.
- You have a Savior that loves you right where you’re at.

*To all who are weary and need rest;
To all who mourn and long for comfort;
To all who feel worthless and wonder if God even cares;
To all who are weak and fail and desire strength;
To all who sin and need a Savior—*

February 22: Mark 2:18-3:6

*This church opens wide her doors with a welcome from Jesus,
the mighty friend of sinners,
the ally of his enemies,
the defender of the indefensible,
the justifier of those who have no excuses left.*

- Behold the unlikely composition of the Kingdom.
 - God is not interested in assembling an all-star team.
 - God is after a blood bought choir from every tribe, language, people, and nation, who will sing of His glory and declare His praises.

He who called Levi still lives and still works. The age of miracles is not yet past. The love of money is a powerful principle, but the call of Christ is more powerful. Let us not despair even about those who "sit at the receipt of custom," and enjoy abundance of this world's good things. The voice which said to Levi, "Follow me," may yet reach their hearts. We may yet see them arise, and take up their cross, and follow Christ. Let us hope continually and pray for others. Who can tell what God may be going to do for anyone around us? No one is too bad for Christ to call. (J.C. Ryle)

- Beware exclusion from the Kingdom.
 - Beware of presumption—forgiveness is not automatic.
 - Beware of pride—forgiveness is not beneath you.
- Be an ambassador for this Kingdom.
 - Jesus is calling us to love, welcome, and pursue sinners of all kinds.

And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:29)

- But it's not just people coming here, it's us going there.

Believers must not build walls of separation from the world. Rather, they are to carry the message of grace and transformation into the world. Doctors do no good for the sick if they hide in clinics behind locked doors. (David Garland)

Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell. (C.T. Studd)

- While the Pharisees looked down on sinners, Jesus looked for them.
 - *Where* are you looking?
 - *How* are you looking?