

This morning I do have a longer than usual sermon and so we're not even going to go into an introduction. We're going to go right into the text this morning. So for those that are able to stand, please join me as we stand together out of respect for God's word and follow along in your Bibles as I read from Mark chapter 2 and we're going to be in verse 13 through verse 17. Mark chapter 2 verses 13-17.

Verse 13. And he went forth again by the seaside. And all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples. For there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" When Jesus heard it, he said unto them, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." These are the words of the Lord. You may be seated.

I want us to look at Mark 2:17. For these are the very words of the Lord Jesus. And this is the statement of God's purpose, not man's purpose. God's purpose is defined entirely by his earthly mission in this text. Let me just read it again. They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The Savior Jesus Christ declares that he did not come to offer praise and compliments to man. Look at how good you are. Or wow, you deserve a noteworthy praise for how good you've done things. No, that's not what he came to do. Just words of praise and compliments. You see, what he came down for on this earthly mission was to not talk to those that think that they were spiritually healthy. That was not the ones that he was mainly here to call out. No, he came to bring spiritual healing and life to those severely affected by the disease of sin. Picture a man, if you will, dying with a fatal contagious illness, meaning you can't see this from the outside unless you saw maybe visible cues of symptoms like coughing or maybe a runny nose. So, something is going on in this man that I'm having you imagine. And he's coming up to the emergency room. He's at the location. He's there. He's ready just about to enter in. But instead of entering in, he hesitates, and instead of running into the emergency room, he just hangs as it were in front of the doors of the emergency room because he doesn't think that the doctors can cure him. He's there at the very location, but yet he does not receive the cure for his illness because something happened. What stopped him from entering in? He thought he was perfectly healthy. He was so deluded. Now this is an imaginary person. Okay? He was so deluded, self-deluded that he thought he was perfectly healthy because externally he looked fine. He was wearing proper clothes. He was in his suit. Everything was fine externally. But at the very same moment, imagine if you will this person in his well-dressed suit turning around and finding people going into the doors and they're a wreck inside and out and they don't pause. They go into the emergency room and they go to see the physicians. You see what is different from that man in the suit and the man or the people that run into the emergency room? They realize that they're not healthy. You see there has to be a connection between the external but more importantly the internal.

Life-saving care in the terms of spiritual health results in this that you would want to be cured of the very disease that is destroying you from the inside out. You see, many people seal their demise by not understanding what sin can do in their life. They don't realize the effects not only temporally but eternally the devastating effects of the disease of sin. So what is the difference is in that imaginary but very true to heart is that one recognizes that he has a disease that must be cured. One doesn't think that he needs to be cured. Even though he has his signs of the disease, he doesn't see that there's a cure. That's a dangerous place to be. And I'm drawing this illustration because it's very close to what we're going to see in the text this morning. So the core part of our text this morning is this. We're going to see the religious elite appear once again just like they did with the paralytic the scribes and the Pharisees and

they look down upon those that are recognizing that they are broken that they are full of this disease of sin and that's the tax collectors the publicans the sinners. Yet when Jesus summons Levi from his place of work, which was his tax booth, he goes on and we're going to see that he leaves his tax booth and he sits down by welcoming others who are also recognizing that they have a disease of sin that they need to be cured of. While the self-righteous group, the Pharisees and the scribes, they don't go and seek a cure for the disease. They're appalled actually. How can Jesus save from sin? You remember that in the paralytic? How can he forgive the paralytic of his sin? We're going to see this again here in the text. You see the dilemma facing every human heart in this room and everyone in the world is this that we are all spiritually sick with sin. Every single one has the disease of sin. As long as we hide ourselves in self-righteousness thinking that we're perfectly healthy, we exclude ourselves from the saving work of Jesus Christ who is called the great physician, the physician of our souls. So today we're going to walk through Mark 2:13-17 and we're going to trace Jesus' ministry from the seashore outside into not Peter's home this time but the home of Levi and we will see how Christ issues an effectual call just like he did with the paralytic said rise he's going to use the same expression But I want you to notice when I get there the tone in the word arise in the text because that will show what happens to Levi in his salvation. So our goal is to move from self-reliant pride to resting fully in the healing grace of Jesus Christ. No one should walk out of this room going, "Oh, yeah, being self-righteous, full of pride is a good thing." I hope to this morning if you think that is good to think that, you know, external is so important to show off that you're okay, that you're doing okay, know this, you are full of disease or sin and you do need a cure. I'm hoping that you sense that this morning if you don't already. So let's now look into the text. Verse 13 to verse 14. Following the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum, Jesus goes off again to the seashore of Galilee. We're going to see that in Mark's gospel, the sea points to the vast expanse of Christ's ministry, his service. Here in the seashore, we see the calling of the disciples beginning with Peter and John and then we're going to see here call of Levi and then in the seashore ministry he preaches and teaches to all people and then he also performs miracles after miracles. We've already seen those with the paralytic and others connecting him to the Messiah all within the Sea of Galilee. So as the crowds come to him in this scenario, he's not preaching now. He is teaching his doctrine is like in Deuteronomy 32:2, a refreshing for the weary soul. A refreshment for the weary soul. When Jesus is always teaching, he wants us to sense like rain in the dew that refreshment and you know that smell refreshment is like when you hear Jesus teaching every time he's teaching it's like Deuteronomy 32 explanation and then like John 6:63 [corrected: preached as 'John 6:33'] where he says they are life. My words are life. They're lifegiving. And I want you to see that stark contrast with the Pharisees and the scribes described in Matthew 23:3-4. Instead of lifegiving and refreshing for the weary soul. In contrast, they the Pharisees and scribes bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders. But they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. See, that's not lifegiving. That is slavery to the uttermost. The wrong kind of slavery. And so he doesn't want to trap people. No, he wants to give life. Whereas the Pharisees and scribes just trap people, trap people, trap people. He wants them to let go, to be freed by his very words. The truth shall set you free as Jesus said. So let's identify Levi. Who is Levi? Just like I in the first sermon in Mark, I just I share with you who Mark was. Let's now identify Levi. Jesus passes by the shoreline road and he sees Levi. We see that in the text and he's described as a son of Alphaeus and he's sitting at the receipt of custom, which is again the tax booth. Think of all those places when you pass a bridge. Now it's all electronic, right? You have to have those sensors. But back then they had people standing there. Before you could enter a bridge or a toll, you would have to pay. You would have to physically pay using money. And then it went to credit cards. And now we said again, we have those gadgets that we put on our cars, right? So he was one of those people. He would stand and receive the tax to use the highways. So Levi belonged, okay, that's his name, Levi. He belonged to the tribe of Levi. And so who are Levites? They were the ancient priestly tribe. They were priests and they were set apart to serve God. That was their main thing. They represented the people in their calling. Yet we see here

Levi not as a priest but yet he is a tax collector and not someone that was treated with great amount of reverence. People hated this man. Hated this man. And so this account demonstrates something of well we see it clearly. He's not doing what his name actually means. He's doing the actually the exact opposite. He's not respected but he is disrespected to the lowest degree. We're going to see that. Now that's the identity of Levi. Now let's look at a little bit into what a tax collector is. I want to go into this because I want you to really understand the depth of this before we get to the main thing that Jesus does for him. So tax collector was specifically in this context there was a thing what was called the Pax Romana. What did this signify? It meant that Rome that's where Levi was this is coming from Rome and it was affecting all areas. So think of like Rome was the central of all economics. They're the one that determined how things are to be treated. And you'll see the connection with Levi because the Pax Romana affected the tax collection that he was doing. And so Rome hired locals and this local was Levi to do toll collecting and that's the word publican. Publican is toll collector. So you got tax collectors and toll collectors but they are all under this thing which is taxes. All taxes come with this Pax Romana. All the taxes go to Rome. So toll collectors paid upfront fees to Rome for the right to collect tariffs. Something we're all familiar with today, right? We've been hearing about tariffs all last year and even this year. So I won't go too much into it, but you can tax a certain percentage of money import and exporting goods, right? And so in order to you know bring in goods into let's say from Rome to Jerusalem there was a specific tax that was imposed for you to travel on those roads and those harbors. But here's the thing under the Pax Romana they were not under impartial courts, meaning that you could do whatever you want. You can collect as much as you want. Now think of that for the person that's that's great. But think of the person on the other side. Basically all their money going to taxes. Think of like you're doing a business and let's say 80% goes for taxes. That would be crazy. You would not be able to live. And so you can understand the hate of the people towards the toll collectors and the tax collectors. And so they used this to their advantage as toll collectors. Again, because there was no impartial courts, they taxed their neighbors an exorbitant amount. We look at one illustration of Zacchaeus who was also a tax collector and he was able to give four times what was taken from people because he made so much money. And so this is a picture again of a toll collector of Levi and he was basically lining his pockets. And here's the thing, it wasn't just well people that he didn't like, but I think it would have hurt him because he was taking it from his own people. Remember, there were he was Jewish and there were Jewish people living in Jerusalem and but they were under the Roman courts, the Roman laws. So to the Jews, when they saw Levi as a tax collector, they were thinking of them as robbery. They were robbing his family as it were. They're supposed to be they're supposed to, you know, this isn't in the text, but you know, when you're part of a family or friend, you give a discount, right? And he didn't think of that. He wanted to do, you know, just like everyone else. No, you're not my friend. No, you're not my family. I'm going to charge you whatever I want. So, you can understand, I'm trying to share with you how much he was hated. He didn't love his Jewish neighbors. He was robbing them according to their eyes. And so in effect, the Jewish people thought him as a traitor to God, a traitor to God and his own country, serving under the Gentiles. Remember, the Gentiles and the Jewish were at odds. And so, he's like, "You're a traitor. You're you're you're just like the Gentiles. You're not like one of us. You've gone so low from being called a Levi to the worst of the worst. So Levi was viewed as the again worst of all kinds of sinners. Yet we see only God can do this type of situation. Jesus looks directly at Levi and issues just two words, a command. Follow me. Follow me. You got to understand here Mark records that Levi arose and followed him. Remember I shared the introduction a little bit that word arose. I want you to now see the significance of that word arose. It is used in Matthew 9:9 as well and is a Greek verb. It's anistemi (anistemi), which means resurrection. He was spiritually resurrected at that moment. Jesus commanded follow me. It's not used anywhere else except here. So Levi did not just merely stand up physically like the paralytic. No, this was spiritual rising, death unto life. That's what resurrection is. When you hear the word resurrection, it's not you're sleeping and you stand up. No, it's you are dead and you are now alive. That's what

literally happened spiritually to Levi here. And so he was spiritually resurrected by the very and this is the word that I express in my prayer is effectual call. You see there's a general call for everyone and that's Mark 2:17. He's calling what sinners to repentance. But here Jesus specifically went to Levi and said follow me. You see that's a personal call. He's not saying follow you all. He says follow me. It's a one-to-one relationship. And this is for all believers. One day suddenly it was as if the words of God was there all the time. But now Jesus is specifically calling you with his words. That's what happened at this moment with Levi. And you got to understand Levi is what was the pre-resurrection for him name. We know he is Matthew. The one that wrote the gospel according to Matthew. And if you know this is that Matthew is actually the word is this. It describes a gift of Yahweh. Gift of the LORD - gift, grace. Amen. It is all of grace. God gave this man a new identity in Christ. His identity before that was him as a tax collector. But now his identity is Christ. A gift of Yahweh. Think of it. He would probably be reminding himself of this over and over. I just received a gift from God. Unbelievable. Only God can do this. Granting this new identity in Christ. You see, scripture affirms that dead sinners cannot awaken their own spiritual life. Only God can. And let me just kind of take this aside and I want to share with you the depth of this of our triune God. I want you to see our triune God and how he brings about grace. We're going to see right now the father, the son, and the holy spirit and how they all work as one for our salvation. The first text I want us to see is Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1. And I'm going to go through I actually didn't put this in my sermon so I have to go to the text. Ephesians chapter 2 and I'm going to read verses 1-5. It says this, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin." You see that? Dead. Dead. Not sleeping. Dead. Verse two. Wherein in times past he walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that is Satan, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. So the reason why you're disobedient to God is because you're under the power of Satan. Verse three, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath. Wrath of God, even as others. Verse four, but God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us verse five where we close even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ by grace you are saved here we see the father in verse five even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us the father brings us together with Christ What a wonderful He is. the one that brings us to Christ. Now, I want us to go to another text where we're going to see the Holy Spirit. Look at John 6:63. John 6:63.

Here, this is the words of Jesus. It is the spirit that quickeneth. You see the same word quickeneth in Ephesians. And here the flesh profited nothing. Nothing is good of the flesh. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. So the father draws us, brings us together in Christ. And then what the holy spirit does is he breathes life in us. All working towards life, eternal life. Isn't that a glorious thing? We see how salvation works about with all three working. That's who we believe in a triune God. So now I want us to go back to our text. The divine authority that commanded the paralytic to walk in Mark 2:11 is the same grace, saving grace, right, that raised Levi out of spiritual death. Spiritual death. So two simple words from the mouth of Christ carried the divine power to break the chains. In this case, greed and treason for Matthew. You see, all of us have our identity in something. And to the paralytic, his identity was that he would forever he thought would live with not able to use his legs ever again. But Jesus in his power brought back life in his legs. His identity is no longer that he cannot walk, but that he can walk. With Matthew, it's that he was full of greed, and he couldn't stop himself from not being greedy. That was his identity. Treason was his identity. He was a traitor. That was his identity. But look at what Jesus says. Follow me. Follow me. Arise and follow me. meaning that that wasn't his identity anymore. Wherever he was in his tax booth, wherever his mind was, he knew that was no longer his identity. Jesus said these words, "Old things are passed away. Behold, all things become new. God changed him, brought him to a place of a new identity." And that's what happens to all of us in our salvation. What was you before? What did you identify yourself as before? And what are you now in Christ? All believers

wouldn't know what that is. What your old life was and your new life is now. And that's what we see here. That's why it's so powerful and so rich with those just two words. Follow me. You were following what you wanted to do, but now you're following me. I am your Lord. I am now your God. Profound, isn't it? We can be following all sorts of things in our old life, but now we are following Jesus. We're following Jesus. And I know we're in the text of Mark, but as has been said about discipleship: it is simple. We help as disciples of Christ help others follow Jesus. That's the mark of a disciple of Christ. We are disciples of Christ helping others follow Jesus. That's what we are to do in our lives. And we're going to see that in Levi's life. So never - here's the point. Never write off anyone beyond the reach of God's saving grace.

As long as God's grace, saving grace is on upon someone's life, you and I have no control of what changes that person. God is in full control. It's the word sovereign. Sovereignty. He is ultimate in power and control over someone's life. And he has the right to give his grace to anyone that he wants. That's what we should always remember. And so you may feel that your past sins maybe in this room that your past sins, your shameful choices or maybe you're like Levi, greed, greed have marked you as irredeemable. Oh, I can't be saved. Do you realize a traitor? One that was despised and rejected and was considered the lowest. Nobody even wanted to approach him or talk with him. In fact, he was so scared of his life, if you know this is that as tax collectors, they would have guards, Roman guards, because people wanted to actually kill tax collectors. If it wasn't those guards, they will all be killed. They were despised. They were hated. They were marked as traitors. So the world and perhaps your own conscience tells you you are too far gone. What has the world called you? Or what is people in general call you? Oh, he's like this or she's like this. Whatever that may be, fill in the blank that people call you. But what is the key is what does Jesus call you? What does Jesus call you? Isn't that the most important thing we see in the text?

But Jesus, oh Jesus does not see as man sees. Amen. Amen. Jesus does not see as man sees. He instead looks at ruined sinners and sees them as future citizens of the kingdom of God. Remember that is what his statement was, right? The purpose of God was what? To seek that which was lost. To seek that which was lost. And he said also the very words. Let me go to it. Here it is, Mark 1:15 and saying these are the words the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. I love those words because repent just means turn. Okay? You can't erase the past. You can't change the past. But what you can do if God is calling you to turn, you will be turned. You will be turned and believe the gospel. You believe something about the gospel. Now believe the gospel. You believed a gospel. believe the gospel because the kingdom of God is fulfilled. See, the kingdom of God in many ways is a upside down of this world. Jesus said these very words in Mark 10:45. We're not going to go to it right now, but he said, "I did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It's an upside down world. This world has a ladder, and the ones that are at the top are the greatest. But actually in the kingdom of God, the ones that are lowest are the highest. It's a servant attitude. It's a servant attitude. And as Christians, that is what we're doing on here on this earth. We're serving our Lord Jesus Christ. We are serving our Lord Jesus Christ as he gave us the example. Now,

Grace is not conditioned on your past performance. It is rather anchored in the very sovereign call of Christ. Meaning, if Jesus calls you, that's all that matters. Is he calling you if you're lost? If you feel you cannot be redeemed, what does Jesus say to you this morning? And said, are you sitting today in this in your seat thinking, "No, I'm I'm still too bad." Are you like that person not going into the hospital room to see the physician? Are you just repeating things that you repeated over and over again or are you actually just not listening to yourself anymore? What the world says or what Satan says, but listening to Jesus because your eternal soul is being held. And this life will determine how your soul will be where it will stand in all eternity by what you do with Jesus.

No amount of temporary earthly gain will ever amount to your salvation. None of

it. So hear the voice of the son of God calling out to you right now through the scriptures. Follow me and you will experience the resurrection power and you'll be able to follow him today. So, have you been raised from spiritual death like Levi's life? Because here's the beauty of what happens to a person that is truly resurrected into spiritual life is that it's not passivity anymore. Oh, I'll just wait now to go to heaven. I'll just live the way I want to and that's the point. You know, many professing Christians think that's the whole point of being a Christian. Well, I want to clarify with the word of God. Let the word of God actually show you what a true Christian is, what a true follower of Christ is upon their salvation. This listen, it should always be filled with joy. It should be filled with joy when you are actually cured of your disease of sin. No longer are you the end is not only physical death but spiritual death but you may die in the flesh but now you have life in your spirit and that will carry you through for all of eternity. Joy should be the very presence of your salvation story. And we see that in the celebration of Levi and how he receives others to want to hear the same the same thing that Jesus Christ can do for his

associates. Look at with me in verses 15 to 16.

Here we see grace imparted and in operation in a believer's life is all of grace. As I remind you, immediately after his effectual call being spiritually resurrected, Levi hosts a banquet. A banquet is simply a large impressive dinner and it has a meaning. So today we have celebrations like let's say 40th anniversary, 50th anniversary, there's a there's a theme behind the celebration, right? Or someone's 80th birthday, 90th birthday, a large milestone you would you would celebrate in that theme. Well, in this case, the reason why he's hosting this large dinner is because he wants to share the theme of his salvation, being resurrected by Christ. He wants to celebrate that his new identity in Christ. That's why he's hosting this large dinner. It's not for himself. We're going to find out. You see, Mark writes that Jesus was at meat. You see that in the text and wealthy homes of that era which again Levi was a very wealthy person. He would be able to gather large amounts of people. He would gather large amount of people. And in the Jewish culture sharing a meal at a table signified intimate fellowship. Intimate fellowship. And so you're going to see why this was, how do I say, scandalous in many ways to those that were seeing this from the outside. A rabbi. People call Jesus rabbi. No rabbi would ever amount to being in a home of a publican or a sinner. Would even dare to do that. would not ever associate with sinners. and so just picture that in your head. So who were these guests? He says many publicans and sinners sat together with Jesus and his disciples. Many sinners. So imagine he was going out immediately and going to all the tax booths and saying, "Hey, I want to welcome you to my home." And not only that, but we see and sinners. So these colleagues would have probably called their friends and welcomed them to this this banquet. And so you can imagine the it wasn't just one sinner. It wasn't just Levi and a few people. No, it was many people that this banquet would host it to. You can imagine the joy that that Levi had in sharing this great news. And so because he was disrespected by society, who are the only people that he would go to? His very own associates again tax collectors and sinners. That's all he knew. So think about yourself. Imagine yourself. What was your past life? And can you go invite those in your past life if you're a believer here this morning? That's how we should think about this part of the text. You see, he was not not wanting to share. He wanted to share. Amen. He wanted to share with all of his associates, all the social outcasts. He knew them by name. He knew them. And he went to call them out to his home to meet Jesus and his disciples. Notice that the publicans are listed before sinners. Order is important in the word of God. They were worse than regular sinners. We see that here in the text. And so Jesus sitting comfortably reclining among them entered into this intimate fellowship with these publicans and sinners. And by the way, this is the fruit of grace. So there's saving grace and then the fruit of grace. Where do we see fruit of grace? Psalm 112:9. That we honor God by freely giving what he has been given to us and we give it to those that are in need of his grace. That is the fruit of grace. upon all believers that have received saving grace. And so he does that with his former working associates again that they might see the savior who changed his life. See, we don't want people to come to us, right? A healthy

disciple of Christ would never want them to come to us ultimately. We would want them to come to Jesus. Just like that paralytic, just like those four friends, they're like, "No, we can just we can bring you there, but you need to see Jesus yourself. We can talk all about Jesus, but no, you have to go to Jesus. You have to go see him yourself." Well, in this case, Jesus came to Levi. So, we see that he can either go to him, bring him to him, but ultimately Jesus has to say those words, "Follow me." He has to ultimately say those words. And Mark notes here the key reason for their presence. For there were many, and I love this. They followed him as well. They followed him as well. What's so important of this, you may ask? You see, these outcasts were not here to mock Jesus. They're they were not here to mock Jesus. No, they wanted to repent and believe the gospel. They wanted to believe the gospel sitting in that room. Jesus Christ, the good news. They wanted that change because they knew that they couldn't receive this change anywhere else in society. Only Jesus could do this. And they saw in the life of Levi. And so it speaks of Matthew 5:3. those that are poor in spirit. He may he may be rich and full of wealth and all these possessions, but the ones that he's called poor in spirit are the ones that are the ones that will be receiving salvation. You see, believing his message and receiving sinners like he did is what Luke 19:10 says. For the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Outcast and lost are very synonymous. Rejected, lost, outcast. He's those are the ones that he's calling out. However, we see in this same text the scribes and the Pharisees, they saw Jesus eating with the group of publicans and sinners and they had this scornful appalling disposition and we see it because the scribes and the Pharisees valued external right changes right it's like why why are you sitting with why they were they were concerned why are you visibly, publicly being displayed with these sinners, they were all concerned about external, external, external, they didn't they couldn't see the deep change that happened to Levi. And so what we see here is rather than confronting Jesus directly like they did with the paralytic, I think they learned their lesson. You go to Jesus, he doesn't expose your heart. So they thought, "Oh, I'll go to his disciples." You see that in the text? He doesn't go, they don't go directly to Jesus this time. They go to his disciples and offer a judgmental question. How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? Do you sense the bitter undertone and their accusation? They're legalistic, only concerned about external change and they cannot comprehend grace. That's the essence of someone who is only caring about external. They don't see grace. They don't see what grace can do in transforming someone from the inside out. And so the Pharisees not only refused to enter into grace themselves, but we see here they also resented grace to others. You know, it says that the Pharisees make twofold of hell a nature of those that they disciple. It's so true. That's the that's the the deadliness of being pharisaical is only be concerned about external change instead of salvation of grace. So Jesus did not come to cater to these religious hypocrites because he later declared for even the son of man as I said did not come to be ministered unto you but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. He's like, basically that text is saying, why don't you have those people serving you? Why are you going to their home? Why are you going and spending time with them? You should be teaching them and you should be having them come to your place, but instead you're going to their home and spending time there. Again, an upside down world is a kingdom of God. You see, in Revelation 3:20, these are the very words of Jesus. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and I knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and I will sup with him, and he with me." It's a wonderful thing. And as a picture of are you allowing Jesus to be the savior of your life, to be the Lord of your life? Luke 14:23 says this about the parable of the great banquet and it's not in Mark's gospel but I want to share this with you. Luke chapter 14 verse 23 it says and the Lord said these are the words of Jesus and the Lord said unto the servant go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. Again banquet represents here in the context is the kingdom of God. These are the ones to invite. The initial invitees in the parable of the great banquet were those who thought they were self-sufficient. They didn't need to come to this banquet. They didn't need to be in because they were so busy with their life and being sufficient for themselves. So, what does the Lord say? says, "Okay, go out into the highways and hedges, the outcasts, those that are outside

of this group of people that think they're so highly of themselves, but those that don't see themselves highly valued internally. They see themselves as spiritually in poverty. go and reach out to those peoples and this in this case the tax collectors the toll collectors the sinners the outsiders and the command to compel means this to strongly urge persuade or plead with people isn't that what Levi did with his associates he must have pleaded with them oh you've got to come this is the one this is the one you got to come to you don't have to go anywhere else. Just come. Just come. You can imagine the joy he had in sharing the good news. And so, how do we apply this? Examine your own hearts. Do you harbor a Pharisaical spirit that categorize people as too far gone, as I said, or just impossible for God to reach? Be careful with that kind of attitude. It seeps in very much in professing Christians. I say professing Christians. True Christians would repent from that. True Christians would never allow that to simmer in into their hearts because God will not allow that to happen. Amen. See, let us not insulate ourselves and our own circle as it were. That's another thing that we should be careful of. We have it so good. But don't you want others to receive this good thing that we have? Don't you want to go outside of your circle, your group, whatever that is right now as a Christian, as a believer? It's a warning for us. We got to be careful when we're not sharing the gospel with other lost people. Remember that time when you first came to salvation in Christ. what that joy, the experience you had. That's what a revived heart is like. When the gospel you want to share with other people, that's when you are revived. That's when you revived. Let's use our homes and our resources. We have we have it good here. Not many people have their own homes. Not a lot of people have their own homes. We do. There are people right now living in huts. There are people living in open garages. We have it so good here. Let us not be unthankful and ungrateful. We have homes. We have resources to bring lost sinners to the feet of Jesus. Not just here into the church building, but in your own homes. Are you doing that? When a sinner comes to trust Jesus as their own personal savior, the immediate impulse of grace is introduce other lost friends to the savior. That should be in every believer's heart because true grace makes us welcoming to the outcasts. We think about the people that are outcasts. We think about the lost not in a condemning way, but in a way, oh, I want them to experience the grace of God. I want them to experience the life transforming work that Jesus does with his words, follow me. Let's not build our own walls, but let's constantly ask God to break down the walls that divide us with the outcast, with the lost in our circle. Let's not be that kind of reputation. May God help us with that. And let me say this. Do not let your past shame keep you. If you are again lost from Jesus. If you have felt rejected by self-righteous people, don't listen to them. Don't listen to self-righteous people. Yeah, there are people that hurt even inside churches. Again, I speak of those that are professing Christians that think that they're Christians, but they're really not. Don't listen to them. If you've have sensed that in your life, go beyond that and look to Jesus. Don't look for their validation of their what they think is where you're going to receive them, where they're going to be received them. You got to do this, this, this, then I'll be your friend. Then I'll love you, then I'll care for you. No, no. Don't don't don't listen to that. Go beyond that. Go to Jesus. See Jesus reclining at Levi's table. See how he welcomes sinners. See how he is welcoming. He doesn't ask, "Change your life before you come to Levi's home." No, he says, "Bring them all in. Bring as many as you can, Levi. Bring them all into your home. I will sit there. I will sit in the very table that you once felt rejected and ashamed." and you get to hear from me. You see, he does not cast out those who come to him. If those people come with sincere repentance, as we see here, they follow him. They were following whatever they wanted in their life, but they're were following him. They were following him. Come to his welcoming table this morning. Experience the forgiveness that he can only offer of your sin. He doesn't demand that you fix your life. Like I said, he calls you to come to him so can he can make you clean so that he could change your life. That happens afterward, not before. He makes you clean afterwards. He makes you be able to right live for him. So while repenting sinners, we're celebrating at the table of grace. the Lord Jesus steps forward to deliver a divine diagnosis that exposes the true condition of every soul in the room because I'm going to now speak more into this in Mark 2:17 [corrected: preached as 'Mark 17']. This is

where we're going to end. I told you this was going to be a longer sermon. he overhears the whispers of the Pharisees and the scribes. Look at this. Jesus answers the Pharisees like this. They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus uses this common expression. The healthy people do not need a doctor, but sick people do. So Jesus here presents himself as a spiritual physician to heal their ruined hearts due to the disease of sin. And the again the taxpayers and sinners, they knew that they were spiritually sick because of sin, the disease of sin. And they turned to him for spiritual restoration. But Jesus delivers his sharp words to the Pharisees. And the scribes and the Pharisees consider themselves righteous. Again, he uses the very words that they use of themselves. He wasn't saying that they were righteous. He's saying, "You call yourself righteous. I'm going to use your own words. You think you're righteous, but that's all external rulekeeping and that now will never restore you. And so the words of God clarifies that this is all facade that people that think they're righteous is actually in reality everyone is spiritually sick. He was speaking to everyone in that room, including the Pharisees and the scribes. We know this from what Apostle Paul says in Romans 3:10. There is none righteous, no, not one. Romans 3:23, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And so we know this. We know these texts. The Pharisees were just like the church in Laodicea. Revelation 3:17. Again, these are the words of Jesus. It speaks so much of Pharisees and scribes and professing Christians. I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. I'm perfect. I'm fine. In other words, but while not knowing that they were what Jesus says, wretched and miserable and poor and naked. That's exposing their true self. Their true self. And so the tax collectors, they knew they were sick. They knew it. The Pharisees, they denied it in their blindness and their pride and they excluded them themselves that day for another opportunity to come to the Savior for true spiritual healing, true cure from their sin. Now, I must move on. Here's the thing. Here's here's where I want to go before we end. The greatest obstacle to your salvation is not the amount of sin that you've done. Don't let that be your hindrance to coming to Jesus. Don't think of, oh, I've done all these sins, and so that's my obstacle for salvation. No, here it is. Here's what we see in the text. It's your pride. It's your pride. It's your pride. You're denying yourself of true cure for the disease of sin. That's it. That's it. That's what we see. Don't let your own pride make you stumble in true salvation. 1 Timothy 1:15 [corrected: preached as '1 Timothy 15'] Paul said this. He was a Pharisee of a Pharisee and God showed him and he tells us this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation accept these words that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. I'm the chief. So, okay, Pharisees, you can come in too. You see that? What a wonderful thing. What a wonderful thing to see what Jesus does and changes a person inside out. Here's where I want to

say from Isaiah 53:5 [corrected: preached as 'Isaiah 53:33']. This is Jesus. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and by his stripes we are healed.

Let those words sink in. And this is where we're going to close. Let those words sink in. Come to the great physician who can heal you from sin. Let us pray. Father, thank you for this time. Lord, I spent so much in your word because I truly want for those that are lost here to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. to know the true Jesus of scripture that he welcomes all sinners. No matter how much they have sinned, Lord, if they will just hear your words today, Lord, let them hear your words. Let them hear what you have done for them on the cross. With the stripes, with the wounds, we are healed. Father, I pray that they would see Lord your spiritual eyes that you would open their hearts. They will come to Jesus Christ this morning and they would have the joy of salvation that they've never experienced up to this point. Bring them to this place, Lord. And we'll thank you, Father, for the precious blood of Jesus that continues to cleanse of sin, continues to save people from their sins. And I pray, Father, for us as believers in Christ that we would continue to acknowledge and remember our salvation story and that personal call in our lives. and that wherever we are at, Lord, with how we relate with people, help us to know this that the

fruit of grace is to welcome other sinners just like us to the feet of Jesus to hear the good news of why he came to come to seek and to save that which was lost. And I pray, Father, that we would be able to by your grace and your mercy and by your strength bring more people to hear of the Lord Jesus Christ and what he can do for them as well. Bless father to this end. We'll thank you for all the good things that you do today in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.