

He Sits With Sinners

Jesus is the Son of God who can not only tell a paralyzed man to walk ... but He can forgive the man's sins too. Mark 2.12 says the people were astonished... *saying, we have never seen anything like this.* The next story of the tax collector's conversion tells us how far Jesus' work goes. What kind of people can Jesus *really* forgive? What we'll learn in this lesson is that Jesus will forgive those who are considered the worst. The gospel is for all. How does Mark 2.13-17 illustrate this?

I. Tax Collectors Were the Worst

- A. They overtaxed individuals for their own gain. Openly dishonest.
 - 1. Viewed as having betrayed their people; they were a disgrace to their family; and committed treason against God. In the same class as Gentiles and prostitutes.
 - 2. 2.14 - Jesus tells Levi to "***follow Him.***" He acts, without hesitation.
 - 3. Luke 5.28 - *he left **everything**.* It didn't matter.

II. Jesus Defied Every Expectation

- A. 2.15 - Jesus dining with those who are viewed with moral contempt and ritually unclean.
- B. Matthew's conversion was not the exception, it was the rule.
 - 1. "**Sinners**" are actually identified in rabbinical law.
 - 2. Gamblers, money lenders, people who raced doves for sport, people who did business on the Sabbath, thieves, violent individuals, and of course, tax collectors.
 - a) Reprobates; notoriously immoral.
 - b) Irredeemable.
 - 3. 2.15 - ***reclining at the table...*** this suggests a prolonged meal with ample time for conversation and discussion.
- C. Seeing the Contrast
 - 1. 2.16 - "**Why** does he eat with tax collectors and sinners," it is asked in the height of contempt. They didn't need anything.

III. The Purpose of Jesus' Mission

- A. 2.15 - Mark lists three groups of people.
 - 1. **Tax Collectors**; Sinners; Many who were **following** him. (disciples)
 - 2. Who are the ones "following Him?" What does it mean to *follow Him*?
- B. 2.17 - Who has Jesus come for? The least. The last. The lost.
- C. What three things do we learn when we take the synoptics together?
 - 1. Mark 2.17 - *It is not for those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are **sick**.* The King has come as a compassionate servant.
 - 2. Matthew 9.12-13 - *Go and learn what this means: I desire **mercy** and not sacrifice.* God is more concerned with mercy than ritualistic obedience.
 - 3. Luke 5.32 - *I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to **repentance**.* Jesus focused on those who knew they weren't righteous.

IV. Conclusion

- A. The church of Jesus consists not of perfect people ... but of forgiven people.
- B. So what about you? If your heart is crying out for help and mercy.... Run to Jesus!