THE GOSPEL OF MARK

COME, FOLLOW ME / JOURNEY GUIDE 05

A Place at the Table



MARK 2:13–22 • SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2026

Jesus calls Levi and shares a table with people others question welcoming. Following him reshapes both our mission and our method: loving God and our neighbors by drawing near with holy, steadfast, sacrificial love.

READ THE PASSAGE FIRST Read Mark 2:13–22 twice. Notice Jesus' actions, the questions people ask, and his replies. Use this guide alone or with a group; pause where you need to reflect.

01 NOTICE

What does Mark actually show us? • Observe and compare

In verses 13–17, who takes the initiative? Who is at the table, who objects, and what is the objection? How does Jesus explain his presence?

Compare the questions in verses 16 and 18. What expectations lie behind them? How do the images of a physician and a bridegroom help explain Jesus' actions?

02 LISTEN

What is the passage revealing? • Interpret and evaluate

THE MISSION Read Genesis 18:18–19 and Mark 12:28–31. How do blessing the nations, righteousness, justice, and love belong together? When can doing religious things carefully cause us to lose sight of their purpose?

THE METHOD Read Mark 2:15–17 and Isaiah 25:6–8. What connects the table with God's work of restoration? How does Jesus' nearness challenge the assumption that faithfulness requires keeping certain people at a distance?

Look for ourselves in the objection. Where might sincere devotion to God coexist with reluctance to love a particular neighbor? We need the Physician, too.

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Following Jesus to the Table



NOTICE / LISTEN / RESPOND

03 RESPOND

How might grace reshape your life? • Apply and discern

Read Ephesians 5:1–2, 25–27. Reflect on these three aspects of love together:

STEADFASTNESS Continue seeking another's good, even when love is difficult.

DESIRING HOLINESS Desire that both of us become like Christ, with the LORD as our standard.

SACRIFICE Give time, attention, comfort, or resources for another's sake.

Think of one relationship. Which aspect of love needs to grow? How might your love become distorted if one is missing? What would it mean to treasure this person while seeking holiness for both of you?

GO DEEPER

Read Mark 2:18–22. Why does the bridegroom's presence change the moment? Notice that Jesus also anticipates fasting. What do the patch and wineskins suggest about trying to fit his work into unchanged expectations?

Where am I trying to add Jesus to my existing patterns while resisting the change that following him requires?

IN COMMUNITY

Choose two or three questions. Listen carefully, and leave time to pray.

1. Recall a time you became so focused on getting something right that you missed the people it was meant to serve. What helped you recognize the larger purpose?

2. A church member says, "If we spend time with people whose choices conflict with our faith, won't that look like approval?" How would you respond from this passage while holding holiness and love together?

3. Imagine your group shares a meal with neighbors whose beliefs differ from yours. What would help you welcome them, listen, and receive their hospitality as well as offer your own? What might that cost you?

THIS WEEK

One person. One invitation. Pray for someone you tend to overlook or keep at a distance. Invite them for coffee, a meal, or a conversation. Make space to listen and learn. Next time your group meets, share what you noticed and how you were changed.

My person: _____ My invitation and when: _____

Jesus, thank you for drawing near to me. Shape my love by your holiness, give me courage to draw near to others, and help me treasure the person before me. Amen.