

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

Mark: 2:13-17 | Friends in Low Places

July 12, 2020

INTRO:

We have been going through the gospel of Mark verse by verse.

And by doing so, we've learned that Jesus is a healer.

And that He is a ^{MIRACLES} healer for a particular purpose—that Jesus' miracles of healing are to validate and prove His gospel message.

But, Jesus is not just a healer, nor a prophet, Rabbi, or even an exorcist.

Jesus is proving to the Jewish people that He is God.

And nowhere did we see this played out more than last week.

Four men brought their paralyzed friend for Jesus to heal.

And not only did Jesus heal him, but he also forgave his sins. 

So what we see here is a demonstration of Jesus' ^{SUPERNATURAL} power.

Jesus has authority over demons, over disease, AND, most importantly, has the authority to forgive sin and provide ^{eternal} salvation.

Jesus has provided a way to be reconciled to God.

~~The religious leaders who witnessed this can do none of it.~~

Because your sins have separated you from God - there is nothing you can do to make it right.

Last week we focused on forgiveness (2:1-12).

This week, we're going to see how forgiveness leads to discipleship (2:13-17).

PLEASE STAND for the reading of God's Word:

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:13-17

Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to Him, and He began to teach them. NIV

And as Jesus passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And Levi rose and followed Jesus. ESV

While Jesus was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following Him. CSB

When the scribes who were Pharisees saw that Jesus was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked His disciples, "Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?" CSB

When Jesus heard this, He told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." NLT

PRAY:

I love the Lord because he has heard my appeal for mercy.

*Because he has turned his ear to me,
I will call out to him as long as I live. (Psalm 116:1-2)*

Amen. Please be seated.

EXEGESIS: Mark 2:13-17

Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to Him, and Jesus began to teach them. NIV

The Lake— The Sea of Galilee.

Probably a pretty good chance that this is near the same location where Jesus called His first four disciples in Mark 1:16.

Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Here in verse 13, we see a method and framework emerging with Jesus.

Jesus is on mission. He's not just wandering around the region of Galilee.

*bumping into people
by accident*

Things are not just happening by coincidence.

We know that Jesus gets up very early in the morning to spend time with His Father, and then Jesus carries out the will of the Father.

He has nothing apart from listening? obeying.

So, here Jesus is by the Sea of Galilee.

Again

Several reasons for this:

1. Crowds: We learned last week that no house, no building will contain the crowds that come to hear Jesus.
2. Being a man on mission, Jesus has an appointment with someone very specific.

I'm reminded of the Samaritan woman at the well.

Jesus is on mission

Back to verse 13

... A large crowd came to Him, and Jesus began to teach them. NIV

As you read through the gospels, you'll see that the primary focus of Jesus' ministry was to teach and preach.

Jesus told us in Mark 1:38 that teaching and preaching are why He came.

And as Jesus passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and Jesus said to Levi, "Follow me." And Levi rose and followed Jesus. ESV

Levi, the son of Alphaeus

The name Levi indicates that this man comes from the tribes of the Levites.

Levi, one of the sons of Jacob.— The fathers of the faith: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

The Levites in the OT were very closely related to the priests.

The Levites were professional religious men. Think of them like pastors or ministers today.

In the book of Exodus, we see the Levites' zeal for God and their job in taking care of the Tabernacle. (Exod. 32:25–28 (cf. Deut. 33:9).

These were passionate godly men!

*So much so they get themselves into trouble w/ Moses & God in Numbers 16
Levite ↳ moderate zeal*

Back to verse 14.

And as Jesus passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth... ESV

Tax booth— Although Levi's heritage comes from the priesthood, he decided that being a poor simple pastor was not the life that he wanted to live.

So, he went to work for the IRS.

Actually, his job was much worse than that. Levi worked for the Romans.

Levi

Levi's boss was essentially Herod Antipas. Roman Governor of Galilee.

Herod Antipas is the son of Herod the Great.

Antipas is the man who killed John the Baptist.

Antipas was involved in the trial of Jesus!

As you can imagine, the Jews detested tax collectors. ? Levi

Regardless, Levi is an entrepreneur.

Because

Tax collectors would buy a franchise from the Romans.

This gave them the exclusive right to collect taxes in a specific area.

The Roman government gave each tax collector a quota.

Tax collectors made money by overcharging the taxes that were due.

The whole system was based on greed and extorting their own family and people.

What happens if you couldn't pay the tax? - Anybody ever due the IRS money? Payment plan?

The Romans also supplied the muscle—the soldiers to enforce the process of collection.

What kind of taxes:

Income tax, land tax, transportation tax.

There were taxes for the use of roads, the crossing of bridges, and many other miscellaneous things.

And then for those people who were unable to pay, they would loan money at inflated and unreasonable interest rate.

So, Tax Collectors loved money.

Spiritual respect

Also

Tax collectors were considered unclean and banned from attending the synagogue.

Even the accidental touch of a tax collector rendered a house unclean (*m. Teh. 7:6; m. Hag. 3:6*).

They were considered so undependable that He couldn't even be witnesses in a court of law.

Any charity were rejected.

The Jews were convinced that repentance was virtually impossible for tax collectors.

The Jews saw tax collectors as "professional robbers" and "rodents of the worst nature."

Now, There were two types of tax collectors.

Yes, one is worse than the other.

The lesser of the two evils was working for the IRS—*Income Tax Official*.

The second ^{*TYPE*} was a customs or a toll official.

So as we look at all three of the synoptic (similar gospels—Matt. Mark and Luke), we see that *Levi was sitting at the place of the toll.* ☺ *-Worst kind*

Does everybody have a picture of what kind of man we're dealing with here?

Levi traded the love of
He betrayed his own family for the love of money.

Make no doubt about it, Levi loved money.

Levi's job was to collect taxes for tolls for using roads and bridges.

This meant everybody knew who Levi was.

Needless to say, he's not the most popular guy in town.

Regardless, Levi was in constant contact with the people.

He would charge them on a daily basis as they passed by his toll booth.

Now, here's the kicker... Levi's booth is near the Sea of Galilee.

It's near the shore.

So a large portion of the taxes that he collected came from fishermen.

Back to verse 14.

And as Jesus passed by, Jesus saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and Jesus said to Levi, "Follow me."... ESV

Question: Who's walking with Jesus?

His disciples! Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

And what was their profession before being called by Jesus?

These guys were all fishermen up until a few months ago!

They all know Levi well.

And you can bank on the fact that they all despise this man with a passion.

And yet, Jesus says... Levi, **Follow Me:**

Can't you just picture that conversation between those ex-fishermen and Jesus?

Sinner / Real sinners / unforgivable - pick someone else

Jesus uses the same exact call to ministry for Levi as He did with Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

See, Jesus did it again!

~~Those words Follow Me~~ must have sent shockwaves through the crowd.

No rabbi would ever speak kind words to a tax collector.

Jesus' words and actions are absolutely and positively scandalous.



It seems that Jesus' scandals are growing in increasing measure.

You can make a good case here that contact with a tax collector is actually more offensive than contact with a leper from two weeks ago.

A leper's condition was not chosen... but a tax collector's profession was.

Back to verse 14.

* ~~...~~ And Levi rose and followed Jesus. ESV

~~Usually, a tax collector would never leave the booth without making arrangements.~~

Wait... what just happened?

Why would Levi do this?

What could change a man who loved the world—who loved his precious money to leave it—instantly?

Ahh! Levi got saved! — You can bank on the fact that Levi's heard the gospel message. Jesus is a rock star.

Keypoint 14 This verse marks Levi's conversion!

Levi heard the message — Levi heard the call — took action — As we move forward, we'll see his name change from Levi to Matthew, which means "Gift of YHWH."

Several disciples also had different names—"Simon Peter / Peter/Cephas," "John/Mark to Mark" even "Saul/Paul,"

Now The gospel of Luke tells us that Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. (Lk. 5:29)

So Levi's salvation is *leads* led to a celebration.

This also could have been a farewell party since Levi ~~was~~ *is* leaving home to become one of Jesus' disciples.

He can't go back. *to his old life He's giving everything up.*

Does that remind you of a certain scenario in the OT? *over & over we see this pattern*

cf: 1 Kings 19:19-20 CSB

Elisha Elijah left there and found Elisha son of Shaphat as he was plowing. *occupation - WAS working just like Levi!*
Twelve teams of oxen were in front of him, and he was with the twelfth team. Elijah walked by him and threw his mantle over him.

*Wealthy Business man Entrepreneur
↓
JUST LIKE LEVI*

Just like Jesus walked by Levi.

Elisha left the oxen, ran to follow Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you."

Call him to discipleship
Jesus said this...

cf: Luke 14:26 CSB

33 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be my disciple."

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

33 Everyone of you who doesn't renounce his own possessions can't be
Does that offend you?

- Those requirements for discipleship

- Levi? Elisha heard that call.

~~That Jesus demands that you separate your family and friends worldly living...~~

~~From your godly living and lifestyle?~~

While Jesus was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many who were following Him. CSB

Levi is filthy rich. So he has a large home to throw a large party.

Par-tae
The music is pumping & the drinks are flowing.

Can you just imagine the other disciples going,

Yep...I paid for that...and that...and that!

Do you think Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John were real thrilled about seeing Levi's home?

While Jesus was reclining at the table...

This is a party with a prolonged meal.

There would have been plenty of time for people to talk with Jesus.

Mission Field
- Share Good News

② In the first century, sharing a meal together was a statement of social acceptance and friendship.

① Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and His disciples,

~~This is often called "table fellowship."~~

Jews would determine their friends by sharing meals.

~~In other words, you would not have a meal with someone that you didn't consider a friend~~

So Jesus is accepting all these "sinners" as friends.

Eating and drinking symbolized acceptance, welcome, and friendship.

I've heard this text preached to where these sinners were the worst of the worst of society.

Murderers, Adulterers, and extortionists.

And yes, there may have been some of those people there, but...

The word "Sinners" in this verse is a general term.

This is a person who commonly and routinely sins.

A sinner is a person who doesn't care about religion or religious things.

This person certainly didn't observe the details of the Mosaic Law.

So...

The sinners who were present at Levi's house were not necessarily moral monsters.

They didn't keep the Sabbath—they didn't go to the synagogues or temple.

They took God's name in vain.

They did not wash their hands before eating.

They had non-Jewish friends.

So what's all that tell you?

Scripture is showing us

These people were no worse us.

We all fit into this category called "sinners."

When the scribes who were Pharisees saw that ^{Jews} he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" CSB

Most scribes—experts in the Mosaic Law—were Pharisees.

Pharisees ("separated ones") strictly observed the written law—the first five books of the Bible—and oral law. *for common people*

Pharisees also believed that God gave Moses explanations and examples of how to interpret the the written law.

~~These unwritten explanations are known as the Oral Law.~~

They had to be memorized, and later these were also written down.

Pharisees cared greatly about oral law? Traditions - Jesus cared nothing about them

"Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

The ^{PARTY} banquet's over, and the Pharisees ask a scathing question. *not going into the house*
It's a rhetorical question.

It's intended as an insult for what they saw as despicable behavior on the part of Jesus.

It's also a control question.

The Pharisees can't control Jesus.

They also can't predict what He's going to do next.

Here we see the biggest problem with religious people.

KEYPOINT:

Religious people love the knowledge about God, but lack the mercy of God.

Jesus hears their question...

When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." NLT

This was a common proverb, but Jesus reapplies it.

He's not just speaking as the Great Physician for physical healing, but as the Savior for spiritual healing.

Paralyzed man from last week
people just like Levi into a relationship

I have come to call—The "call" is a call to God's salvation and discipleship.

Eternal

Jesus also compares and contrasts the different groups of people that the Pharisees are so concerned with.

compare & contrast

Sinners/Righteous— Jesus is now using their terminology!

cf: Matthew 9:13

... "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'"

Jesus wanted them to unlearn what they learned in seminary.

Pharisees learned that a righteous standing before God had to be earned through one's own effort.

The phrase "go and learn" was an Hebrew expression used to rebuke their foolish ignorance. Very stern.

corrects
If you were standing next to Jesus when he said this, you would be embarrassed.

They first rebuked Jesus, and now Jesus is rebuking them by sending them back to the OT—the book of Hosea which they're supposed to be experts in.

One of the central ideas in the book of Hosea is God's unchanging love for Israel.

cf: Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. NIV

God's saying, I don't want a dead animal as a gift.

I want you to have a personal relationship with Me.

PREACH:

What's this mean for us today?

I don't think it's a coincidence—It's another call to repentance.

I find it God's providence because I called you to do last week before the message.

Jesus calls one of the most hated men in Galilee to be his disciples.

Jesus then goes to celebrate with Levi and all of his friends, who religious people won't have anything to do with.

Now, most of us in Church today would agree—that the gospel is for unworthy sinners.

Salvation is for all, and there is a special place in God's heart for people that society doesn't want.

So here's my question for those of you who call River Bible Church your home?

Where are they??

Where are all of Levi's friends in the Verde Valley?

Call me Captain Obvious, but I can't help but notice that, for the most part...

cf: Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. NIV

characteristic of God - quality of compassion - God shields & protects you from what you deserve -> judgment -> hell

God's saying, I don't want a dead animal as a gift.

I want you to have a personal relationship with Me.

cf: Romans 12:1-2 CSB

...in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

Compassion
- serve others no matter the cost to yourself

Your life is not about worldly happiness, it's about holiness.

It's not about comfort or the illusion of control.

How do you learn to be holy?

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Renew your mind?

Are you allowing the world to teach you about God? - TV, Movies, Music, News, Talk Radio

PREACH:

What's this mean for us today?

- when someone takes the name of Jesus and says "I'm a Christian" and then they do the opposite of what Jesus said to do - they turn it off

I don't think it's a coincidence - It's another call to repentance. Providence from last week.

Complaining, gossip, slander

I find it God's providence because I called you to do last week before the message.

To repent from our religion, traditions, etc - unchanging attributes - talk about sinning things up.

Jesus calls one of the most hated men in Galilee to be his disciples. Israel
Jesus then goes to celebrate with Levi and all of his friends, who religious people won't have anything to do with. Party

Now, most of us in Church today would agree—that the gospel is for unworthy sinners.

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Where are all of Levi's friends in the Verde Valley?

Call me Captain Obvious, but I can't help but notice that, for the most part...

There is a particular age group, with a certain hair color that is pretty dominant for those of you who call this Church your home.

Why is that?

Why is your pastor one of the youngest people here?

And this is not just an age thing...

Where are our Hispanic friends? Black friends? Asian friends? Mixed-race friends?

Where are our Jewish Christian friends?

Where are all the people that don't look like us?

Where are all the people covered in tattoos?

Where are those people who are struggling to keep their marriages together?

Where are those who are working alcoholics?

Cor 6:11 - God's A lot - just like you - remember? not to long ago

~~add the people that the church~~



our friends

our friends

our friends

our friends

piercings, long hair

Where are ^{our friends} those who like to gamble and drink too much and watch pornography?

Where are the democrats?

Are they not welcome here?

^{friends?} Are these friends not welcome here?

Because these folks are the very same folks that were Levi's friends—

And after Jesus told them the gospel—^{some} they followed Him.

So, where are all of Levi's friends in the Verde Valley?

Why are they not w/ us this morning?

My friend and colleague, Pastor Frank Nevarez, over at C3 Church says this...

We have become keepers of the aquarium instead of fishers of men.

-wow

Pastor Jim Hammond over at Verde Valley Christian Church said...

Church is not a cruise ship, it's a battle ship.

And make no doubt about it, you are being called into service—into the front lines to do one thing.

What's the primary focus of the local church?

Matthew 28:19-20 CSB

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.

Now let me ask you—on a scale from 1-10, how are we at RBC doing with advancing the gospel and baptizing new believers?

When is the last time this church baptized a new believer? 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 years

We don't even have a baptismal.

That shows us our priorities — but not anymore — not as the Lord moves us forward. Does anyone want to be a Church and not a country club?

I'm not trying to be offensive, it's a legitimate question.

cf. Matthew 9:36 CSB

When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.

How many people in the UU are stressed out w/ no hope?

When he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few.

So the question before us today is, do you want to be a worker?

If so, let me know. We'll put you to work. - *Call to Discipleship*

- Also = Discipleship class - *Thurs from 9A-11A*
↳ 1st week in August

PRAY:

I love the Lord because he has heard my appeal for mercy.

for Levi's friends
Compassion
Feels like a lot of people in low places and so are we because we were there too.

Because he has turned his ear to me, I will call out to him as long as I live. (Psalm 116:1-2)

In Jesus Name Amen.

Lord's Supper:

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe who brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the the fruit of the vine.

Tithes and Offerings:

And that's why a portion of your tithes and offerings go to missionaries like them worldwide.

Ways to give:

1. Two black boxes in the foyer.
2. PO Box 4540 Cottonwood AZ 86326
3. Online via our website at RiverBible.org
4. On text 928-421-4030. Give 100% to the Lord.

Prayer After Service

Online- Prayer box

Live: Ray and Debrey

Sermon Bibliography

Mark 2:13-17

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