

## Launching Your Mission

Mark 2:13-17

Rev. Kyle Parks

May 31-June , 2025

### \*Sabbatical recap:

- Family road trip to the Southeast
- Eastern Europe and Western Asia
- Time with old friends in Chicago
- Time away to fast and pray
- Lots of time outside to play with the kids and plant a garden
- Attend a conference for pastors and church leaders

### \*Post-Christian Europe

-the coldness of churches in Europe (more like museums)

### \*500 years ago and the Protestant Reformation

### \*Conference: Word Ministry in Post-Christian Europe

-Need the Word of God now more than ever

## **The Word of God is the work of God**

-and the need for warm, vibrant, and welcoming communities

Mark 2:13-17 (Matthew 9:9-13 and Luke 5:27-32) love the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus...

**13** He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. **14** And as he passed by, he saw Levi (Matthew) the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

**15** And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. **16** And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **17** 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."

### \*Opening Prayer

Breakdown:

Jesus in Capernaum

Mark 2:1-2 - context

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. **2** And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.

-Simon's home?

**v. 13** He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them.

-details: now living in Capernaum, seaside was a good location to teach and preach (\*show pics)

**v. 14** And as he passed by, he saw Levi (Matthew) the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

-the calling of Matthew, disciple name (Levi, family name)

Matthew means "Gift of God"

Matthew was a tax collector - the term was often used in congruence with sinners and/or prostitutes (who sold themselves to Rome)

What is the equivalent of a tax collector today?

-IRS, scammer, or crooked politician?

opposite of Simon the zealot

"Follow me"

compelled - "And he rose and followed him."

Mark 1:16-20

"Follow me" - do what Jesus did/become like Him, look like Him

Mark 3:14 – appointed 12 to be *with* Him (all the time)

Over the course of 3 years: they would learn the way of Jesus and ministry model

\*Jesus' teaching list...

sermon on the mount, parables, caring for the least of these, money and hell, being born again, worshiping in spirit and truth, abiding and unity, prayer and fasting, truth and love, grace and mercy

\*Jesus' healings list...

lame, crippled, blind, mute, deaf, people with leprosy and withered hands, demon possessed, and people who were dead

\*Jesus' questions list...

He asked around 300 questions, 200 were asked of Him, only directly answered 8 of them

**Q.** What does “*Follow Me*” mean for us today? (**Implications**)

\*Following Jesus can be unpredictable

We like routine, comfortable, familiar, etc. Change is the exception rather than the rule.

**Disciple – a learner and a follower** (Change is typical) Rule rather than exception.

**\*A believer who lovingly follows Jesus and intentionally helps others to follow Him**

-That's what Christians do as disciples of Jesus

As a church:

**Living on mission by glorifying God and making disciples of Jesus among our neighbors and the nations**

“Follow Me” ...

1. **Only**

Colossians 3:4

When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Luke 4:8

“And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.””

“You shall have no other gods before me”

**Q.** Where does your allegiance lie?

2. **Wholeheartedly**

-with everything you have

Mark 12 - Love the Lord your God...

3. **Immediately**

-not waiting like others who claimed to want to follow Jesus

-in contrast to those who had a lot to lose or had excuses (let me first go bury my father, let me first say farewell to those at home)

Back to the text:

**15** And as he reclined at table in his (Matthew) house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. **16** And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” **17** 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.”

The reason that Jesus mixed so freely with people of this sort was just because their need was so great, and because they, unlike the ‘religious’, were conscious of their need and therefore responsive to his message.

Cole, R. A. (1989). *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 125). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Matthew 11:19 - ‘a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’

\**Our Great Savior* by J. Wilbur Chapman:

Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!  
Jesus! Lover of my soul;  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,  
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

*Refrain:*

Hallelujah! what a Savior!  
Hallelujah! what a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
He is with me to the end.

Jesus in v. 17:

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick...I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Matthew 9 - parallel passage

**13** Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice...’

“go and learn what this means” is actually sarcastic

\*Hosea 6:6

For I desire steadfast love (or mercy) and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

-righteous meaning *self-righteous*

The point is that, without the primary pre-requisite of a sense of need, there could be no healing for them, for they were unwilling to come to him, the sole source of healing, to seek it.

Cole, R. A. (1989). *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 126). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

“they did not understand the purpose of Jesus’ mission. Expecting a Messiah who would crush the sinful and support the righteous...they were being aligned with the apostates of ancient Israel in that they too were preserving the shell while losing the heart of the matter, as exemplified by their attitude toward tax collectors and sinners.” -commentary

like in the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus came to seek and save the lost...

Matthew 21:28-32- the parable of the two sons

**28** “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ **29** And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. **30** And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. **31** Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. **32** For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

1. ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went (sinners)
2. ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. (self-righteous)

...And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

-Understanding this can prove difficult for those who grew up in a Christian home and have a strong faith background from a young age.

\*Example: The Parable of the Prodigal Son (or the parable of the two lost sons)

I Timothy 1:15 tells us why He came...

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”

Luke 5 - parallel passage

**29** And Levi (Matthew) made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.

-partly a cultural thing (examples: lobster dinner in Belize, chai tea in an Indian slum, recent breakfast in Poland, African coffee ceremony)

“the lost art of hospitality”

Why?

Americans - love freedom, autonomy, privacy (Covid only made things worse)

the front porch used to be the gathering space for friends and neighbors but now we have retreated to our back decks

-we also have our privacy fences and our attached garages

-we can change this by neighboring

\*Jon and Sallie in South Carolina

Acts 2 - the early church breaking bread together

Revelation 19 - the marriage supper of the lamb

### **The Word of God is the work of God**

Luke 14:12-24 - the parable of the great banquet (in the house of a Pharisee)

**12** He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. **13** But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

**15** When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” **16** But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. **17** And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ **18** But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ **19** And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ **20** And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ **21** So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ **22** And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ **23** And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. **24** For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick...”

Matthew 15:29-31 - Jesus healed the lame, blind, crippled and mute (the outcasts of society)

“Follow Me”

Messiness- uncomfortable situations  
the poor/homeless/needly

\*picking up people in the past

Leave outcomes to God

Listen to someone’s story

**Q.** Why is it so difficult to live on mission/follow Jesus this way? Here are a few:

1. Culture is shaping us (important not ultimate)
2. Phones are distracting/enslaving us (scrolling ourselves to death)
3. Politics is dividing us (not worth losing a brother over)

-what you talk and post about the most oftentimes reveals the most important things to you.

-If we only had the word of God to sustain us (instead of cheap imitations), how would our lives and interactions look different?

### **The Word of God is the work of God**

\*my neighbor who came to faith by reading the Bible

### **Action Steps:**

1. **Follow Jesus: only, wholeheartedly, immediately**
2. **Hang out with the kind of people Jesus did**

\*The Art of Neighboring - a “Matthew” block party

3. **Invite people into your home**

-we are all called to live on mission, whether here or abroad, don’t get caught up in places or locations

-living on mission is not just for the called or spiritually elite

4. **Trust God’s Word knows what’s best**

\*One book shop in Germany

**the Word of God is the work of God** - let's trust what it says and act accordingly

### **Communion setup**

Matthew 26 - Jesus eating a meal with his disciples

**26** Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." **27** And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, **28** for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. **29** I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."