

# mark

C O M E F O L L O W M E

## The Inclusive Kingdom (Mark 2:13-17)

**Bottom Line:** The Kingdom of God is available to those who know they desperately need it.

**What is the sickest you have ever been? Did someone help you during that time? Who was it?**

**How did being that sick change your perspective when you started feeling better?**

**Why do you think Jesus is sometimes referred to as “The Great Physician?” What does that title indicate about who He is and what He came to do?**

Whether we know it or not, all of us are infected with the terminal disease of sin. But that’s precisely why Jesus, the Great Physician, came. Because Jesus came for the sick, He is willing to meet anyone right where they are in their spiritual journey and call them to salvation and discipleship. But as we accept that call, we must remember that Jesus establishes the rules of our relationship with Him.

**Read Mark 2:13-17.**

**These verses tell us there were crowds following Jesus. Why do you think Jesus focused on Levi in particular?**

**Why was Levi a surprising choice for Jesus to call? What does Jesus’ calling of Levi show us about His character and His mission?**

As a tax collector, Levi was considered a greedy traitor in the community. Because he was a social outcast, he would be the last person people would have expected Jesus to associate with. But Jesus, both then and now, calls all kinds of people to be His disciples.

**Who are some of the people that we might treat like tax collectors today?**

**Why is it important that we see ourselves as one of these people instead of being better than these people?**

**When we do that, what are we showing we believe about God and His grace?**

**Why is it important to know that Jesus doesn’t only call people to salvation, but also to discipleship?**

When Jesus extended the call to Levi, He did so with the end in mind. Jesus meets us where we are, and all of us are just as unclean as the people considered Levi to be. At one point or another, all of us were on the outside looking in, and apart from Jesus’ call, that’s exactly where we would have stayed. When we remember that, we can know that no matter how far and long we walk with Jesus in the journey of discipleship, it is only by His grace. Then we will be able to celebrate the presence of that grace in others.

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**Why were the Pharisees so upset about the party?**

**Do you think you have Pharisee-like tendencies in your heart? Why or why not?**

**Do you have any relationships with people who are far from Jesus? If not, why? What are some ways you might form relationships like that?**

Levi was excited about what had happened to him, and so it was the most natural thing in the world to invite his friends from the wrong part of town to meet this same Jesus. As we follow Jesus, we too will begin to adopt His posture toward those who are far from God. We will intentionally seek these people out, just as Levi did, rather than avoid them like the Pharisees did.

**Who is one person in your life in need of God's mercy? How can you further your relationship with him or her this week?**

**What are some practical ways you can associate with the kind of "sinners" that Jesus came to save?**

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**Reflection:** Read these aloud, using your discretion about which questions should be pondered and which questions should be discussed.

**The beautiful thing about this passage of Scripture is that it records for us what Jesus spent the most of His time doing: communing with those who were far from God. We have to remember that Jesus did only what the Father told Him (John 5:30; 8:28). Meaning that Jesus' God-given mission was to reach those who the rest of society had cast aside and forgotten. Jesus is God, meaning that Jesus is like God. But the reverse is also true: God is like Jesus. Just as Jesus' heart was to reach those who didn't know Him, God's heart is that those who don't know Him would repent of their sin, believe in Jesus' saving work for them, and enter into relationship with Him (2 Peter 3:9). If you feel far from God, you should know that God doesn't want you to stay there. He is actively pursuing you. The question is will you turn from sin and turn toward Him? He'll be there ready and willing to receive you.**

**If you're going to follow Jesus, you'll have to do so alongside everyone else that is following Him. Which means that at some point you'll have to walk alongside "tax collectors and sinners", you'll have to do ministry alongside "the sick", those who Jesus came to save. Does your heart recoil at this? Are there certain people in our church, our community, or in your life that you feel "afraid" of or "better" than? Is there anyone person (or a group of people) who you intentionally try to avoid? It's an old, cliché question, but it's suitable here: what would Jesus do? Would He go to them and invite them to follow Him? Or would He avoid them and consider Himself better? Will you repent of any prejudice you have towards any one person or group of people, and commit to trying to reach them for Christ?**