

Series: The Gospel of Mark
"Sinners Only" # 10
Mark 2:13-17
2-26-17 Sun PM

Last time we saw that Jesus had authority to forgive sins as exemplified in the healing of the paralyzed man in the house at Capernaum. Of course, the Scribes accused him of the highest level of blasphemy- being equal with God!

In our text today Jesus reveals the people to whom He extends forgiveness- repentant sinners. The gospel is for sinners only.

TT- The glory of the gospel is that God receives unworthy sinners who know they are not worthy to receive forgiveness. They repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Someone called this the **scandal of grace** because God forgives those who don't deserve it.

This passage illustrates that no sinner is beyond the reach of God's grace. Jesus could save the lowest of the low, a tax collector, Matthew or Levi.

As the account last week, this narrative revolves around three main points:

I. The Corrupt Tax Collector (vs. 13-14).

1. Matthew's Occupation (vs. 13-14a).

Jesus left the house at Capernaum and went by the seashore of the Sea of Galilee where he taught the many people. What was He teaching? (Mark 1:14-15).

As Jesus was going back toward Capernaum, He passed by a receipt of custom [toll station] he saw Levi collecting taxes and said to him, "Follow me" and he followed Jesus.

No reputable Rabbi would speak to a tax collector much less invite him to follow him. Tax collectors were despised by society for collecting too much tax at escalated interest's rates.

Levi (Matthew in Greek) son of Alphaeus was a Jew and tax collector in the largest city on the Sea of Galilee; He was rich and hated. He was considered the worst of sinners.

Matthew knew about Jesus because both were headquartered in Capernaum. What is important is what Jesus knew about Matthew.

2. Matthew's Transformation (v. 14b).

Jesus saw an outcast who was wretched and miserable, weighted down by guilt and ready to repent. This was evidenced by the call of Jesus and Matthew's immediate response.

According to Luke 5:28, Matthew left everything behind and was transformed from a lover of money and the world, to a Christ-following lover of God. The miracle of regeneration had taken place.

This is what Paul said in **Phil. 3:7-8**, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (8) Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

I. The Corrupt Tax Collector (vs. 13-14).

II. The Contempt of the Self-Righteous (vs. 15-16).

1. The Celebration of the Sinners (v. 15).

Matthew's transformation led to a celebration. Matthew held a large reception for Jesus in his home and many tax collectors and sinners were in attendance.

No respectable rabbi would have broken bread with such a group of sinners and outcasts.

Here we see the first mention of the word "disciple" in Mark's gospel. The word means "learner" and was applied to the Twelve or other followers. Again, this is the scandal of Grace, Jesus forgives those who don't deserve it and know they don't deserve it.

2. The Contempt of the Scribes (v. 16).

The scribes saw what happened at the tax booth and followed Jesus to Matthew's house. They did not go in and defile themselves, but saw what was going on inside.

They cornered his disciples and asked this question of contempt, "Why is he eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?" Eating and drinking symbolized acceptance, welcome and friendship. That Jesus would share a meal with such unclean reprobates angered them.

They considered themselves righteous and everyone else a sinner. Jesus was about to turn their dead religious system on its head.

III. The Condemnation of the Savior (v. 17).

Luke 5:32 adds- "I came not to call the righteous (self-righteous) to repentance but sinners to repentance."

Matthew 9:13 adds that Jesus told them to go and learn what this means: "I desire compassion and not sacrifice." Matthew quoted Hosea 6:6 where God is more concerned with a merciful heart than a hard, hypocritical heart.

What does all this mean?

1. The scribes should have agreed that tax collectors and sinners were spiritually sick and need of a physician.

2. They were spiritually blind because people know that those who recognize they are sick seek out a physician.

3. The Lord's ministry was not directed at the self-righteous but those who knew they were not righteous. They were more lost than the ones they thought were lost.

Closing:

1. The church consists not of perfect people but forgiven people who are perfect in Christ.

2. We have been granted the righteousness of God as a gift of his grace through faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:21-26; 2 Cor. 5:21).

3. Sinners only need come! Recognizing we are sinners is the first step to salvation and God's grace.