

JESUS: FRIEND OF SINNERS

--MARK 2:13-17—

INTRODUCTION:

By rejecting Jesus, the religious leaders demonstrated their own ignorance in regard to the Messiah's mission which was to seek and save the lost. Jesus identified all people as sinners, the scribes and Pharisees were no exception. But because they were blinded by their own self-righteousness, unwilling to recognize their own sinfulness, they denied their need for a Savior and therefore rejected the Messiah. This is why Jesus focused His ministry on those who were well aware of their sinfulness, those who made no claim to being righteous. Those who knew they fell short of God's law. These were those that were ripe for the Gospel. The wonder and glory of the Gospel is that God receives unworthy sinners. Forgiveness is granted to those who know they do not deserve it. This is the scandal of grace that God saves those who do not deserve it. As we get into this morning's passage, we will learn that no sinner is beyond the reach of God's grace.

I. THE CALL OF LEVI (MATTHEW) (Mark 2:13-14)

- a. After the healing of the paralyzed man that we looked at last week, Jesus left the house in Capernaum and went out again by the _____.
- b. After ministering to the crowds and as Jesus was possibly returning to Capernaum for the evening, He passed by a _____ station.
- c. Levi, better known by his Greek name _____ was a Jew, this we know because of his Hebrew name and the name of his father Alphaeus which is also Hebrew.
- d. The Roman occupation of Israel was hated by the Jews, nevertheless it was not going away and as such the Jewish people were required to pay _____ to Rome.
- e. When Jesus called Levi to follow Him, it must have been as shocking to _____ as it was to those who heard Jesus issue the call.

- f. Luke tells us in the parallel passage in Luke 5:28 that Levi (Matthew) left _____ behind to go with Jesus.

II. THE FRIEND OF SINNERS (Mark 2:15)

- a. Levi's salvation led him to hold a celebration in _____ of Jesus in his home.
- b. No Pharisee, or scribe, or rabbi of any kind would have ever broken _____ with the group of outcasts that were around Levi's table.
- c. How many at Levi's banquet received _____ that night?

III. THE CONTEMPT OF THE SCRIBES (Mark 2:16)

- a. Remember the scribes and Pharisees were _____ everything that Jesus was doing.
- b. Now remember the scribes and Pharisees were _____ not only in the Law of Moses but also in the countless manmade traditions that their experts and rabbis had added to the Law over the centuries.
- c. They questioned the disciples not because they were _____, but out of contempt and outrage.
- d. It is ironic how their _____ attitudes clearly displayed their hypocritical religion.

IV. THE FOCUS OF THE SAVIOR (Mark 2:17)

- a. Jesus overheard the protest of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus responded with His own _____. (Luke 5:32; Matthew 9:12-13)
- b. First, Jesus uses a _____ illustration that shows us the compassionate nature of His ministry to sinful people.
- c. Second, Jesus in Matthew's account answered the Pharisees and scribes from the _____ Testament. (Matthew 9:13; Hosea 6:6)
- d. Third, Jesus again clearly stated the focus of His ministry when He declared, "*I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (to repentance).*" (Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32, NASB95)

CONCLUSION:

The mission of Jesus was seeking out those who knew they were sinners and extending to them grace and mercy as they repented and believed in Him. By contrast, the Pharisees and the scribes were so far from God, that although they could identify other people as sinners, they were unable to recognize their own sinful condition.

The Pharisees and scribes had no mercy on those they deemed less holy than themselves. Jesus extended God's mercy and grace to all who sought for it by faith. Because they thought they were righteous, the religious leaders refused to show compassion toward others. Because Jesus Christ truly is righteous, He graciously demonstrated the mercy and love of God toward sinners. The scribes and Pharisees raged with hate against Jesus when He attended to the needs of the spiritually desperate. The protests of the Pharisees and the scribes never deterred the merciful Great Physician from gladly extending forgiveness to repentant sinners and welcoming them into His Kingdom. He is still doing this today.

The church is not made up of perfect people, but of forgiven people. Those who come to faith in Jesus Christ do so because they know that they are not righteous and cannot by their own power or ingenuity become righteous. Through faith in Jesus Christ, they are granted the very righteousness of God as a gift of His grace. It is only because of the finished work of Jesus Christ that they have been pardoned and accepted by God, being the trophies of His grace for all eternity.