

POWER HOUR

1/5/2025

Lesson Text:
Mark 2:13-17

Background Scripture:
Matthew 9:9-13, John 1:35-51

Devotional Reading:
1 Corinthians 6:9-11

“CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: *17* 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.” *Mark 2:17 NLT*

Time: *A.D. 28*

Place: *Capernaum*

Mark 2:13-17 NLT

13 Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. **14** As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him. **15** Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus’ followers.) **16** But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, “Why does he eat with such scum?” **17** 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.”

INTRODUCTION

You hear about them from time to time, people who have lived a horribly evil life but have turned to Jesus and been transformed. Levi was one such person.

1. Jesus calls Levi (Mark 2:13-14). After teaching the crowds, Jesus continued along the lakeshore. For Levi (also called Matthew), who is identified by Mark as the son of Alphaeus, it was just another ordinary day at his tax booth.

It must be noted that the Jews hated paying taxes to the Roman government. To make matters worse, Levi a Jew was working for the enemy. His own people hated him for that, but it provided considerable income. Then Jesus passed by, and his whole life began to change.

Jesus passed by Levi's tax collection booth and saw him sitting there. Jesus spoke with authority, simply saying, "Follow me" (vs. 14). Levi left everything and obeyed.

Levi did not seem like the best candidate to be Jesus' disciple. He was despised by his own people, and the Romans were just using him to extract money from the Jews. But Jesus looked upon Levi and had mercy on him. He saw in Levi someone who would follow and serve Him.

2. Jesus makes friends of sinners (Mark 2:15-16). Jesus was dining in Levi's house with other tax collectors and sinners, all despised by the Jewish religious leaders. The text tells us that these outcasts had begun to follow Him.

Then there was the religious crowd, who seemed to follow Jesus around looking for some reason to criticize Him. They condemned Jesus for mixing with the dregs of society.

3. Jesus came to call sinners, not the righteous (Mark 2:17). Jesus' statement did not at all mean that the "good" people did not need Him. Jesus made it clear that it is not our goodness that takes us to heaven but our belief in Him.

Jesus looked at the scribes and Pharisees and said that those who were well did not need a doctor. Those who needed care were the sick. He meant that those who knew they were sinners would find their answer in Him, but the Pharisees, in their self-righteousness, would not repent.

Jesus said that the "tax collectors and sinners" knew that they needed help. They found it in Jesus. He did not come to call those who thought they were good enough but to turn the hearts of those who acknowledged their sin.

We still sin even after we find forgiveness in Jesus, but we are declared righteous through Jesus.

POINTS TO PONDER

1. Jesus calls whomever He desires, no matter what others may think or do (Mark 2:13-14a).

2. The best obedience is immediate obedience (vs.14).
3. What does Jesus' choice of Levi suggest to you about the makeup of His band of disciples? Did such choices hurt or help His mission?
4. Why do you think the scribes and Pharisees questioned Jesus' disciples rather than Jesus Himself?
5. Was Jesus saying the scribes and Pharisees were spiritually healthy? Why is it crucial to get unbelievers to see themselves as sinners?
6. What kinds of people today would be thought of similarly to the tax collectors of Jesus' day?

CONCLUSION

One of Mark's emphases is the compassion of Jesus to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of those around Him. He carefully chose a group of men to learn from Him and eventually to become spiritual leaders in the church. Among them were some that most of us would never have picked as good candidates for such ministry.

QUESTION(S)

Who was Levi, and why did his occupation make him an unlikely candidate for being a disciple?

What was Levi's response to Jesus?

Where did Jesus go soon after He called Levi, and who else went?

Why were the scribes so critical about the people Jesus was with?

How did the scribes voice their criticism this time?

What did the scribes and Pharisees possibly mean by their use of the term "sinners"?

What response did Jesus give to the scribes' criticism?

How did His response reflect on those who felt superior to others?

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is *"Jesus Seeks Out Zacchaeus"*

Lesson Text: *Luke 19:1-10*

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