

THE GOSPEL OF MARK "Doctor"

Mark 2:13-17 (NIV)

⁽¹³⁾ Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ⁽¹⁴⁾ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. ⁽¹⁵⁾ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ⁽¹⁶⁾ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" ⁽¹⁷⁾ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

LEVI (MATTHEW)

- *None of the 12 was more notorious as a sinner than Matthew.
- *He is the Author of the gospel of Matthew but he only mentions himself twice.
- *Hated tax collector which meant he was a Social, Religious, Moral outcast of the Jews.
- *They were disqualified from being a judge, expelled from the synagogue, and a cause of disgrace to his family. Their touch rendered a house unclean. Jews could not receive money and alms from them since the revenue from taxes were deemed robbery. They were considered traitors to God and country

TWO KINDS OF TAX COLLECTORS

The Gabbai were general tax collectors. They collected property tax, income tax, and the poll tax. These taxes were set by official assessments so that there was not much corruption at this level.

The Mokhes collected a duty on imports, exports, goods for domestic trade, basically anything that moved on the road. They set tolls on roads and bridges, taxed beasts of burden and axles on wagons. They taxed parcels, letters and whatever else they could find. The amount was left up to them to decide as long as they gave their kick backs to Rome. They could tax how they wanted and had the backing of the Roman soldiers.

There were two kinds of Mokhes – the Great Mokhes or Chief Tax collector, which Zaccheus was (Luke 19:2). And the Little Mokhes which were hired by the Great ones who manned the office and had to deal with the people face to face.

"FOLLOW ME"

- *'following' is an act that involves risk and cost, it is something that one does, not simply what one thinks or believes.
- *"Follow Me" comes from a word meaning 'to walk the same road' The word is in the imperative mode, it is issuing a command. It is not "Would you like to follow Me? I extend this invitation to you." Here was a King, sovereign in his demands. Levi leaves his business because of the force of the command.
- *It is in the present tense, commanding the beginning of an action that is habitual. It is 'start following me and continue as a habit of your life of following me.' It is not just "Follow me" but "Follow with me." The pronoun is in the associative instrumental case . . . Jesus did not just merely command Levi to become his follower, he welcomed him to a participation in His companionship. It wasn't get behind me and follow me, but come alongside me and join me.

THE SCANDAL OF GRACE

- *The scandal of the story is that Jesus demands a precondition of his love and grace. He loves and accepts them as they are. He does not make them forsake their ways and turn to Jesus in order to receive his love.
- *He loved them as sinners wanting to be forgiven.
- *Jesus has the same love for a brand name sinner like Osama bin Laden.

'SINNERS'

- *The word 'sinner' had a double meaning. It not only broke the moral law but also a ceremonial law. The man who committed adultery and ate pork. The man who stole and murdered. The man who did not wash his hands the required number of times. All were considered 'sinners.'

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

- *It is impossible to convince someone who doesn't think they are sick.
- *But you know what is funny is that the doctor who has the problem, not only does he have the problem, but he is also going to pay the bill.
- *The irony is that the greatest of sinners are those who think they are righteous.

"Some want to live within the sound of Church or Chapel Bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." C.T. Studd

"God is looking for a band of men and women who will do anything to save a soul from sin for the Kingdom of God." R. C. Sproul

CHALLENGE

Where are you at in "following" Jesus? Are you still standing in the shadows? If you are not following Jesus, you haven't moved. How are you with hanging out with those who are not following Jesus before you love? Have you ever considered throwing a party? Have you ever invited a bunch of people over in order to share the love of Jesus?

NOTES