

A Friend of Sinners

Mark 2:13-17

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Flawed Views Regarding Interaction with Unbelievers

- 1) They are our spiritual enemies.
 - Especially on moral, social issues like abortion, homosexuality.
- 2) We must entirely separate from them because of their sinful choices and the potential influence that they can have on us or our families.
- 3) We must not isolate ourselves from unbelievers, but we should dress and behave so differently that we stand out as believers.
- 4) As much of our time as possible should be spent with believers, so there may be no time for unbelievers.
- 5) On the other extreme with these other flawed views is the view of some today, we must become exactly like unbelievers in every way in order to win them.

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Mark 2:13-17

- The theme: Jesus' mission was to seek the repentance and salvation of sinners. And to accomplish that mission He purposefully pursued them.
- Two Scenes...
 - I. The Sovereign Call of an Undeserving Sinner (13-14)
 - II. A Supreme Example of Pursuing Sinners (15-17)

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II. A Supreme Example of Pursuing Sinners (15-17)

- A Disciple's Mission (15)
 - 15a - And it happened that He was reclining *at the table* in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples.
 - Luke 5:29 - And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other *people* who were reclining *at the table* with them.
 - Greek word for *reception*
 - a banquet or feast
 - Luke: "a mega feast"

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Dining in the 1st Century

- Casual meals eaten sitting down.
- Special banquets or feasts, they reclined.
- In a wealthy home like Levi's, there would have been a special room, devoted to eating.
- Typically the tables arranged in a u-shape.
 - Stood only about 8-12 inches off the floor.
 - Around the tables were pads, or cushions, or couches long enough for the entire body (cf. Esther 1:6; 7:8).
 - Each guest would have lain on his side, leaning on the left elbow, and eating with his right hand.
- Hands were washed both before and after the meal.
- Only utensil, the bare, right hand.
- In most Jewish homes, a blessing was said over the food.
- The main meals – at noon and in the evening.
- After the meal, music or extended conversation.

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II. A Supreme Example of Pursuing Sinners (15-17)

- **A Disciple's Mission (15)**
 - **15a** - And it happened that He was reclining *at the table* in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples.
 - **15b** - for there were many of them, and they were following Him.
 - **15a** - And it happened that He [Jesus] was reclining *at the table* in his [Matthew's] house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

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II. A Supreme Example of Pursuing Sinners (15-17)

- **A Legalistic Objection (16)**
 - **16a** - When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors...
 - Scribes
 - Copy, teach, and interpret the Torah.
 - Most were members of the sect of the Pharisees.

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The Mishnah

- He's disobeying their interpretation of the Torah.
 - Mishnah: he that undertakes to be trustworthy may not be the guest of one of the people of the land.
 - "He who undertakes to be an associate ... may not be the guest of one of the people of the land nor may he receive him as a guest in his own raiment."
 - One of six things inappropriate for a scholar: "he should not recline at table in the company of ignorant persons."
 - "Let not a Pharisee eat the sacrifice of the people of the land."

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II. A Supreme Example of Pursuing Sinners (15-17)

- **A Legalistic Objection (16)**
 - **16a** - When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors...
 - **16b** - they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"
 - Why to His disciples?
 - 1) Cowards, who avoided confrontation.
 - 2) Jesus is still inside the house, so they can't get to him.
 - 3) To try to undermine the disciples' confidence in Jesus.
 - *Tax collectors*—the dregs of 1st century Jewish society.
 - *Sinners* - those who failed to keep the rabbinical interpretations: morally corrupt.

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II. A Supreme Example of Pursuing Sinners (15-17)

- **A Biblical Correction (17)**
 - **17** - And hearing *this*, [either overhearing, or hearing from His disciples] Jesus said to them...
 - 1) A common-sense proverb, that was common in both secular and religious writings.
 - "It is not those who are healthy [lit., the strong ones] who need a physician, but those who are sick [lit., having badly]."
 - 2) A clear-cut statement about His mission.
 - I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

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Four Powerful Lessons...

- **1)** Jesus' mission was to seek the repentance and salvation of sinners. And to accomplish that mission He purposefully pursued them.
- **2)** The invitation to the gospel of forgiveness in Christ is for sinners!

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Four Powerful Lessons...

- **3)** We must follow both the example and the instruction of our Lord, and pursue social interaction with unbelievers to seek their repentance.
 - Matt. 9:12-13
- **4)** The day is coming when Jesus the Messiah will sit down with sinners to whom He has extended grace at a great feast in the presence of the Father.
 - Rev. 19:6-9