



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #9

Sunday, June 2nd, 2024

‘Unconventional Thinking!’

Mark 2:13-17

Last week in ‘NOW’ sermon series:

- Last week we began in chapter 2 of Mark’s Gospel as we looked at Mark 2:1-12.
 - ***Where four individuals lowered a paralytic man into a roof and Jesus was able to heal Him based upon their faith.***
- From that text of scripture, I preached a message entitled ***‘A Home for the Hurting!’*** where I asked the question: ***What does a Church that becomes HOME for the hurting look like based on the example that Jesus gave?***
 - ***Point 1: The Church Will be Full. (V. 1-2)***

- ***Point 2: The Church Will Fulfill Needs. (V. 3-5)***
- ***Point 3: The Church Will Face Naysayers. (V. 6-7)***
- ***Point 4: The Church Will Follow Christ. (V. 8-12)***

- Based on last week’s message, how can we as a Church become more of a place where hurting people can find healing through Christ Jesus?

‘Unconventional Thinking!’

Mark 2:13-17

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can follow Jesus’ example of unconventional thinking by looking at how He calls an Obscure Hated Man, Converses in an Open Home, and Clarifies Out-loud Heresies.

Intro:

- In Mark 2, Peter recounted to Mark of different circumstances that Jesus faced early on in His ministry.
 - ***While Jesus was doing these things in His ministry, there are five different controversies that begin to arise between Jesus and the Pharisees in Mark 2 through Mark 3:6.***

<i>Scripture Text:</i>	<i>Reason for Conflict:</i>
Mark 2:1-12	Forgiveness.

Mark 2:15-17	Eating with Sinners.
Mark 2:18-22	Fasting.
Mark 2:23-28	Sabbath.
Mark 3:1-6	Sabbath and the decision to kill Jesus is made.

- *The temperature is certainly heating up between Jesus and the pharisees/religious leaders.*
 - We began to see that last week when Jesus said that He had the authority to forgive the sins of the paralytic.
- *This morning we see even more just how unconventional Jesus' thought process and ways were compared to the Pharisees.*
 - *This morning I want you to see that part of our journey of sanctification as a Christian is pruning ourselves of our human thinking and following the mindset of Christ Jesus.*
- *John McArthur and other scholars have called the passage we've arrived at this morning as 'the scandal of Grace'.*
 - I believe God can use this particular passage to challenge our current ways of thinking and align them more with His way of thinking.

- *There are two particular ways in this passage that Jesus challenges believers today in how we think and live:*
 - *#1: Most of us here today don't spend much time with sinners.*
 - *#2: Many of us in this room today think more like modern day Pharisees, than we think like Jesus Christ.*
 - *This is why Jesus' thoughts and ways were and are so unconventional and foreign to us today.*
 - Many of us today are similar to what the Pharisee prayed in *Luke 18:11*.
 - 'The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed_[a] thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.'
- *Sometimes we think that we are a gift to God instead of realizing that He really and truly is a gift to us!*
 - Our prayer life and thinking **SHOULD** follow more closely to that of the tax collector in *Luke 18:13*:
 - 'But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'
- *So, when we arrive to a passage like we have this morning, may we allow God to convict our hearts and*

lives, to seek to change our thinking, to be more aligned with Him.

- *Dr. Daniel Aiken gave this challenge to his listeners when preaching this text: 'Look carefully at all the characters in the story and ask, 'with whom do I most identify? Am I loving and serving sinners as Jesus did?'*

Read Mark 2:13-17

Question to Ask:

How does Jesus show us that He does not think in the normal/conventional way that many people do?

Point 1: *Calls an Obscure Hated Man. (V. 13-14)*

- 'He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. **14** And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.'
- *Verse 13 shows us that Jesus what He loved to do and what He came to earth to do.*
 - *Teaching the Word of God and calling people to follow Him.*
- What Jesus did earlier in the synagogue, He was also doing in public by the lake.
 - *We will see throughout Mark, that a lot of the Lord's teaching was outdoors, simply because anywhere indoors couldn't hold the crowds that wanted to hear Him. As we saw last week.*

- Dr. Daniel Aiken made a strong observation about Jesus teaching outside by the lake:

■ *'To reach the lost, you have to be with the lost, and you must share the Gospel.'*

- *Teaching was a big part of Jesus' ministry and this is another aspect of how His mindset often differs from our own.*

■ We often want people to know that we know something, instead of leading them to encounter God and personally know Him.

- *While verse 13 shows us that Jesus was teaching by the Lake, verse 14 shows that Jesus is going to call an additional man to follow Him, but that this particular one was hated by those around him.*

■ Concerning verse 14, I believe there are **2** things that we need to point out:

- ***The Background of Tax Collecting. (V. 14a)***

- 'And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth,'
- The text shows us this morning that Jesus specifically and strategically crossed paths with a tax collector by the name of Levi.

■ *Most scholars and theologians all agree that this is the same man that we know as Matthew.*

- ‘As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.’
Matthew 9:9
- Now what Matthew/Levi did as a vocation, automatically made him disliked by the community.
- *For us to fully understand this, we need to study the background of tax collecting during this time.*
 - Even today when I simply mention taxes, tax forms, and the IRS it makes sense to say that high blood pressure and heart medicine go along with that.
 - *Just as taxes are not our favorite word or thing today, neither was it in Christ’s day.*
 - *The romans collected their taxes through a system that they called ‘tax farming.’*
 - *Each district in Rome would be given a fixed tax rate and then to decide who would collect the taxes of the citizens in that district, they would select the highest bidder.*

- *The buyer would have to turn in the figure that was assessed by the Roman government at the end of the year.*
 - But, whatever he collected over that fixed amount, he was allowed to keep.
 - *Now you can see why this was a job that was ‘bidded’ on.*
- *Most tax collectors were disliked in their communities due to the widespread dishonesty that existed in this field.*
 - In Rome, there were two types of taxes.
 - #1: **Poll Tax.**
 - The poll tax required all men from ages 14 to 65 and all women ages 12 to 65 had to pay a tax simply because they were alive. **Everyone had to pay this.**
 - #2: **Ground Tax.**
 - The ground tax required 10% of all grain and 20% of all wine and oil produced. In some specific areas, the Roman would also place a tax on fish.

- This man that society had hung out to dry, would later become the writer of the first Gospel.
 - ***God can do life altering transformative work in anyone's life. But He may use you and I to bring it to the most obscure and hated people in our society.***
 - Look at what Jesus said to Levi, 'Follow me'
 - ***This is the same imperative that Jesus had given the first four disciples that we saw were called to follow Him from Mark 1:16-20.***
 - The basics of following Jesus hinge on faith and obedience in Christ Jesus.
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word 'follow' comes from the Greek word ***'Akoloutheo'*** ἀκολουθέω ***which is used in the Gospels only in reference to Jesus' disciples and never of those who opposed Jesus.***
 - ***This greek word occurs 19 times in Mark and in the greek text, is a synonym with Faith.***
 - ***James Edwards stated 'Following is an act that involves risk and cost; it is something one does, not simply what one thinks or believes.'***
 - Matthew is taking a huge risk. No one will trust him or believe in him. They feel as if he is a fraud. But he takes a leap of faith anyway, and Jesus gladly welcomes Him.
 - ***If you think you're too messy to be a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ, then you haven't allowed the life changing power of Jesus to truly cleanse and change you.***
 - In the same way, don't avoid others based on what their mess looks like or what they may or may not struggle with.
 - ***First we see that Jesus calls an Obscure and Hated man to follow Him, but Jesus is going to take this even a step further in verse 15...***
- Point 2: *Converses in an Open Home. (V. 15)***
- 'And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.'
 - In the eyes of the jews and religious leaders, Jesus was once again in contact with something that was viewed as unclean.
 - ***Not only did He allow Himself to be associated with Levi, the tax collector, but He went into his home.***
 - We already discussed how in Jewish culture and circles, no one would have allowed Matthew into their home.
 - ***But Matthew (his greek name btw), became the place where Jesus was that day along with all***

kinds of different people that were present there.

- I believe there are **2** things we need to look at in regards to how Jesus converses in this open home and who He converses with.
- ***A Celebration in Matthew's Home. (V. 15a)***
 - 'And as he reclined at table in his house,'
 - In order to understand what was going on in Matthew's house today, we need to look at the greek text.
 - ****Word Study****
 - The phrase 'reclined' here comes from the Greek word ***'Katakeimai'*** *κατάκειμαι* which literally means to 'recline on a couch for the purpose of dining.'
 - ***It appears that Matthew holds a celebration meal for the transformation that occurs.***
 - ***The usage of this word in the greek text suggests a formal or festive meal, and it seems that it was done in Jesus' honor.***
 - Jesus knows that this response by Matthew to have a celebration is appropriate. Because the day of salvation is to be a day of celebration in the life of a Believer.
 - 'Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents

than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.' Luke 15:7

- Jesus converses with these people that society had casted out...
 - ***I wonder how incredible those conversations undoubtedly were.***
- ***The Company in Matthew's Home. (V. 15b)***
 - 'many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.'
 - Fellow tax collectors would have been the main 'friends' that Matthew would have had.
 - ***His jewish friends and relatives would have wanted to have absolutely nothing to do with him.***
 - The term ***'sinners'*** that is found here in verse 15 is a technical term for common people that did not live by the rigid laws of the pharisees.
 - The greek word for sinners here can also mean 'people of the land'
 - JM pointed out ***'This group would have included known criminals, thieves, thugs, enforcers, and prostitutes-all part of the outcast network of which Matthew himself had been part.'***
 - It was a regular sight for this crowd of 'sinner's to be in Matthew's home.
 - What was not normal, however, was the appearance of the disciples.

***door of your own heart and allow
Christ to truly transform you.***

- As I've referenced before, we don't need anymore theological peeping Tom's.
 - There is **I** important to thing to see here in verses 16-17.
- ***Jesus defends His evangelistic Methods. (V. 17)***
 - 'And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
 - ***Here Jesus reaffirms and further clarifies His purpose in coming to earth.***
 - Jesus wanted to call sinners to Himself through repentance so that they might be saved.
 - We all know many people from many different walks of life that choose not to accept Christ because they feel that they have it all together. They don't need Him.
 - ***These are people that don't fully recognize their sin and the magnitude of it, enough to admit that they need a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.***
 - Scholar Kent Hughes said '*All we can do is wait. Sooner or later life will go sour, and their dreams will collapse at their feet. Then they will know their need.*'

- But in order for this to occur, we need to tell them of their need by sharing the Gospel with them.

- ***The scriptures are not advocating for believers to spend time with sinners and then act more like sinners.***
 - We are to be strong in our faith so that we can expose Jesus to those who do not know Jesus.

Conclusion:

- ***When I began the sermon this morning, I explained that I was hoping and praying our own personal ways would be challenged.***
 - ***That this very morning, our own thinking would be changed by the only one who can change us, Christ Jesus.***
- Let me remind you of the two reasons that I stated earlier as to how most believers think today:
 - ***#1: Most of us here today don't spend much time with sinners.***
 - ***#2: Many of us in this room today think more like modern day Pharisees, than we think like Jesus Christ.***
 - ***Now that we've studied and exegeted this text, how does God want to change your way of thinking this morning to be more reflective of the way Jesus thought and lived?***

- No matter how long we've been a Christian, we need to rethink our thinking process this morning. We need to make sure that our thinking aligns more closely with Christ, than that of the world.
- ***We can see the unconventional thinking of Jesus when we look at:***
 - **Point 1: *Calls an Obscure Hated Man. (V. 13-14)***
 - **Point 2: *Converses in an Open Home. (V. 15)***
 - **Point 3: *Clarifies Out-loud Heresies. (V. 16-17)***