

Found among Sinners

Mark 2: 13-17

Following a season of ministry around the region of Galilee, Jesus had returned to Capernaum. His return created quite a stir, as multitudes arrived at Peter's house, hoping to see Jesus. The palsied man was miraculously healed, and Jesus made a statement that caught the attention of the scribes – **Son, thy sins be forgiven thee**. There could be no doubt that Jesus had power unlike any they had encountered, but the scribes and Pharisees became skeptical of Jesus. They accused Him of blasphemy, and from that moment on, closely scrutinized His every word.

In our text, Jesus remains in Capernaum, continuing to minister unto the people. Once again the scribes and Pharisees are watching, and they will find fault with Jesus. In fact, He will deal with their opposition and accusation from this moment forward.

In spite of their opposition, Jesus is committed to fulfilling the Father's will. Let's examine the [interactions of Jesus](#) with those in Capernaum as we consider: [Found among Sinners](#).

I. Jesus among the People (13) – [And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them](#). Jesus is found among the people of Capernaum. Notice:

A. His Approach (13a) – [And he went forth again by the sea side](#). Following an eventful day at Peter's house, Jesus is found by the sea side in Capernaum. He could have easily stayed at the house, and the people would have come to Him, but He desired to get out among the people. He was not content to sit and wait; Jesus went out in pursuit of men.

- This approach is so simple, and yet the modern church has lost sight of its importance. We assume everyone knows where the church building is located. We advertise our service times, and people know they are welcome. Sadly, we are content to sit and wait on them to come to us instead of going into the highways and hedges, compelling them to come in!

B. His Attention (13b) – [and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them](#). This was quickly becoming the normal routine. As people heard of Jesus being by the sea, they came to where He was. As the people gathered, Jesus immediately began to teach them. That was His purpose for being there; He desired to reach them with the Gospel. He did not neglect them, but took time to minister unto them.

- We too need to seek out and maximize every opportunity to be of service to the Lord. Everywhere we go, there are people who need to hear the Gospel. We must not allow these everyday opportunities pass us by without being a witness for the Lord.

II. Jesus among the Pestilent (14) – *And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.* Here we find Jesus among one despised by society. Consider:

A. His Occupation – *And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom.* Jesus encountered Levi, also known as Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom. Matthew was a Jewish man who was employed by the Roman authorities. He was simply a tax collector. The Romans had placed taxes on various goods and the Jews were forced to pay. Often these men would increase the taxes, taking advantage of the people for their own profit. Needless to say, most Jews had little use for one who was sympathetic to the Romans, while taking advantage of their own countrymen.

B. His Opportunity – *And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me.* Jesus was well aware of Matthew's employment, and yet He extended the offer to follow Him in ministry. The scribes and Pharisees were never happy with Jesus' approach to ministry, but we continually see Him reaching out to those society rejected.

- I am eternally thankful for the opportunity I received to come to Jesus. Most in modern society would have rejected me, and been unwilling to extend a hand, but Jesus graciously invited me to come to Him in salvation!

C. His Obedience (14b) – *And he arose and followed him.* Although he was despised by most, Matthew enjoyed a lucrative business. However, he was willing to walk away from a secure job in order to follow Jesus. Like those before, Jesus was very specific in the call, but there were no details about what would be involved. Matthew stepped out in faith to follow Christ.

- The glorious opportunity to come and follow Christ is still available today, and yet many do not respond to the invitation. Many fear they will lose the stability they enjoy in life. They fear they will lose friends, and no longer enjoy life. That is what Satan wants us to believe, but nothing could be further from the truth. Following the Lord doesn't promise wealth and riches, but it does promise peace, security, and eternal life! I am glad I responded to the offer of salvation, coming to Christ for forgiveness of sin and justification in Him!

III. Jesus among the Publicans (15) – [And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.](#) Here we find Jesus in the home of Matthew, among the publicans. Notice:

A. The Gathering – Jesus and the disciples had been invited to share a meal with Matthew and his friends, after his agreement to follow Christ. Possibly this was a farewell party among friends, as Matthew would be leaving town to serve in ministry with Jesus. Matthew probably was very excited about his relationship with Jesus and wanted to introduce Him to his friends.

- Experiencing Christ in a real, personal way brings about transformation. I remember the day I was saved and the weeks that immediately followed. I told everyone who would listen about what the Lord had done for me!

B. The Guests – Mark reveals that along with Jesus and the disciples, many publicans and sinners were there as well. The publicans were fellow tax collectors. This does not appear to be a party that a respectable Jew would have wanted to attend. Jesus is found among those society despised and rejected. He is among those the scribes and Pharisees would have avoided at all costs. (We must note that Mark says nothing about Jesus partaking of their sinful ways. That would have been contrary to His nature, and He never would have done that. However, Jesus is found seated among them, desiring to minister to them!)

- Again, the majority of western churches have lost the biblical model. Rather than engaging people where they are, we sit in our ivory towers and wait for them to come to us. When they do arrive, they are closely examined in an effort to discern whether they will fit our mold or not. Many today do not welcome those who do not look or act like the majority. (Share the confrontation with a deacon about a man with alcohol on his breath.)

IV. Jesus among the Pharisees (16-17) – Finally we discover the interaction of Jesus with the scribes and Pharisees, the religious elite who knew the Scriptures. Consider:

A. Their Observation (16a) – [And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners...](#) While these men would have never entered the house of Matthew and shared a meal with publicans and sinners, they did follow Jesus to see where He went and what activities He engaged in. They had become skeptical of Jesus, and were determined to prove their assumptions correct.

- If you are committed to following the Lord and serving Him, you must be prepared for scrutiny. The world will watch every move you make, seeking to find a means of accusation or perceived hypocrisy. Some within the church will even watch your life and question your motives. You must learn to live and serve the Lord while being closely watched by others.

B. Their Opposition (16b) – *And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?*

They immediately questioned the motives and discretion of Jesus. Why is He eating with those ungodly people? They were amazed that Jesus would enter the home of Matthew, much less share a meal with sinners. They were determined to find fault and a means to accuse Him. (It is interesting that they confronted the disciples and not Jesus Himself.)

- This is a topic we have discussed much, and it is frequently found in Scripture. If you are committed to doing anything for the Lord, expect someone to criticize you, and even condemn you. The world is not pleased with our efforts to serve Christ. Some within the church will also oppose your efforts to serve the Lord. While there is abundant strength in the Lord, serving Him is not for the faint of heart. If you haven't faced opposition, eventually you will.

C. The Proclamation (17) – *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Although these would not heed His words, Jesus actually turned the tables on them. He declared that His actions were in accordance to the will of God and made perfect sense. He had not come to seek out those who were right with God, but those who needed repentance and salvation. Jesus knew this was His purpose for coming, and He would not be deterred regardless of the opposition He faced.

- This is really quite convicting when we take time to consider its significance. I would never discourage Christian fellowship. It was practiced in the Bible and encouraged for every believer. However, we cannot abandon our obligation to reach the lost. We have not been called to spend all our time with those of like faith, secure within our sanctuaries; we are called to take the Gospel to the lost and perishing. They are not going to come to us, so we must go engage them where they are! The church's focus is not to maintain our comfort within the sanctuary, but to glorify the Lord through obedience in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ!

Conclusion: Jesus was found interacting with people where they were. He sought them out in an effort to reveal Himself as the Christ. Many responded by faith, following Him. He faced much opposition from the religious establishment. We too must share the Gospel with others, where

they are, in an effort to reach them before it is eternally too late. I know I need to be a better witness for Jesus. How about you? If you are unsaved, Jesus came for you. He died and rose again so you would have the opportunity for salvation and eternal life. Respond to His invitation to follow Him in salvation!