

Mark 2:13-17 “Follow Me!”

Jason shared with us how he had the opportunity to lead a young gal to Christ on an Airplane.

A)I have had that opportunity as well – **Divine appointment** – sitting next to someone who is just **ripe to meet Jesus**.

B)But I have also had some **awkward moments on some airplanes**

C)There was the time last year – when I was speaking at a **Men’s conference in the South** with Sandy Adams, and Ken Graves.

The conference was Friday and Saturday – but I had to leave Saturday morning in order to get back home in time for our Sat. evening service.

A)Small airport – I got there in plenty of time to make my flight – Go through security.

B)I have to say – **I love the new security machines that you can go stand in.**

Look like a Criminal - Ok – **all the same**.

C)See For 13 yrs I have had a metal hip and ever since 911 – when I would go through security – **I would set off the metal detector in security.**

1)Step over here sir – Yells – I got a male assist lane 1 – Everyone looks

(**Stares – I hope that guy is not on my plane.**)

D)My wife and kids would laugh and take pictures! Drag

1)So I love the new thing – hands over your head – **yes sir officer – I DON’T CARE!**

E_Well, this airport didn’t have the new machines yet

So old one, sure enough the machine goes off – **Bring out the wand – new cloth thing – machine.**

A)Something is not registering right – We have to take you into **this room for a more thorough and private pat down.** – REALLY

B)Empty pockets – Check they gave me for speaking

C)Go through the deal – let me **go rushing now** to make my flight.

D) I get up there –I am last person to board – realize I don’t have my check

Sorry – be right back – running – sure enough check is in the trash in the room – rush back –

A)So sorry – that is ok – good news, you have been bumped up to first class

THANK YOU LORD.

B)Happened a couple of times – first class Rocks – one of the things bigger seats – serve you your beverages before take off.

C)Last guy on the plane – overhead is full carry on fits but not my computer bag – **Embarrassed**

1)the guy next to me is sitting there – Poured his Jack Daniels

Cc) It is sitting on tray in between the seats – I accidentally **knock it over onto my seat**

1)Flight attendant is trying to clean it up.

D)Horrible – So needless to say – that guy – was not real stoked – Doofess -

1)Wanted nothing to do with me – flight takes off – head phones on – AWKWARD

E)And I am going to get **off the plane** – and go directly to church – smelling like Jack Daniels

1)Awkward moment

Well on our flight to Colorado – I had this awkward moment –

A)Denise Window – Me isle – **hope no one sits between us** – sometimes Denise moves –other times – **makes for a conversation starter.**

B)So we are on our flight – this young girl sits between us – we take off and in 5 minutes she is out – really out.

1)**This is what happens** –

C)She was so out – we kept propping her up and she kept falling back on my shoulder – AWKWARD

Sometimes our interaction with unbelievers can feel like that – Awkward.

A)Don't know what to say – or how to start the conversation.

B)But that was not the case with Jesus – He was actually given this title – **the friend of sinners.** – They liked him {

C)Had a lot to do with 2 things – **1st The way he viewed people** –

1) **2nd The way He viewed himself**

D)Those are the two big ideas we are going to focus today: **How did Jesus view People?**

How did Jesus view Himself ?

E)In our text today We see an example of those TWO things in our text today – THE CALLING OF LEVI

1)Outline

#1 Levi's Profession and Reputation.

#2 Levi the man.

#3 Levi's call.

#4 Levi's Witness

D)Review to set the scene

We have seen that the Popularity of Jesus has been growing immensely

A)Ch.1 Cast out demons from a man in Capernaum

B)Ch.1:28 ***His fame had spread throughout all the region of Galilee.***

C) Ch. 1 Healed Peter's mother in law – V.33 the whole city is bringing their sick and demon possessed – Healed many sick – demons cast out.

Jesus gets up long before daylight –goes to pray:

A)As the city wakes up – all they can think about is where is Jesus- Peter goes looking for Jesus –

B)ch.1:37 { **Everyone is looking for you.**

Jesus says – Go to the next towns – Preach there also.

A)Luke 5 we are told that when Jesus was in a certain city – **one of these other towns** – a Leper approached him - cleanses the Leper.

B)Tells him – don't tell anyone – go first to the Priest – fulfill Lev. 14

1)He doesn't listen – goes and tells everyone – word spreads

C)Never occurred before – Crowds still growing – so much so that

1)v. 45 **Jesus could not even enter that city.**

So Jesus heads back to Capernaum – where we find him at the beginning of Ch. 2 – He is in a house – Sharing – The Paralytic – four friends brought him to Jesus – dig through the roof

A)Awesome story – Son, your sins are forgiven you – What? only God can forgive sins – which is easier

B)Easier to say rise and walk – in order to forgive sins Jesus had to go to the cross

C)Ok – Just so you know that I am God – Rise, take up your bed and walk!

That is where we pick up the story here in v.13 of Ch. 2 Jesus heads out to the sea- Liked to be by the water. Taught

A)Encounter with one of the worst Sinners in the town.

Bb)V.14 Mark tells us **that Jesus saw Levi the Son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth.**

B)Levi is a tax collector!

C)Big deal he worked for the IRS – Actually it was a really big deal.

#1 Levi's profession and reputation.

A)The Romans collected their taxes through a system called “tax farming”

B)The Chief tax collector would buy his position from Rome –

C)Similar to farming out franchises such as McDonald's fast-food restaurants).

B)They assessed a district a fixed tax figure, and then sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidder.

1)That person would be known as the chief tax collector in that district.

C)The buyer had to hand over the assessed figure at the end of the year and could keep whatever he gathered above that.

1)So they would **inflate the tax rate** – in order to make a living – great opportunity for extortion.

In that day there were 3 main tax Districts - so 3 chief tax collectors.

A) We know who one of them was. Luke 19 Zacheaus the wee little man – Chief tax collector – His city Jericho was one of the three

B) Another one of main tax offices was located in Caesarea –

1) because it was by the sea, port city, a lot of trade went through there, a lot of money.

C) The other main tax office was in Capernaum. –

1) because it was a trade route. Lots of pp passing through – lots of goods.

The chief tax collector was in charge of several things – ground tax – it was a agricultural society.

A) Ground tax – you paid 10% to Rome for all the grain – so he might charge – 12%. – Keep 2%

B) Part of the ground tax included – one fifth for all fruit and wine – Pay in either money or product.

C) There was a straight income tax of 1% - sounds nice

D) There was a Poll tax – on each member of the family – boys above 14 and girls above 12 – you paid a tax

So the Chief tax collector would collect taxes on those things.

A) He had pp under him who worked for him – who actually did the job of collecting the taxes

B) Levi is one of those guys – working for the Chief tax collector of Capernaum.

Because we find Levi sitting by the road – at his tax booth – we can assume that Levi's area of oversight for collecting is the Road tax.

A) These were the worst tax collectors of all. His job would have been to collect the road tax **all travelers - on imports, exports, bridges – pay to cross a bridge**

B) Also would - Collect a harbor tax for boats

C) And archeologist have discovered that some of these guys even charged **an axle tax for the number of axles on your wagon and **a wheel tax** – for the number of wheels**

D) They charged more for Pack animals – and luxury items.

1) They could randomly have you unpack your belongings and require a tax on any item in your possession.

E) And what they have discovered in these road taxes, and port taxes – is there was no code- **It was purely up to the tax collector – that day.**

1) So they gauged the pp for whatever they could get out of them. {Mafia

Consequently these tax collectors – ran with a rough crowd – attracted a criminal element of enforcers - thugs, thieves and robbers.

A) That was Levi: One of those guys – Hated by his countrymen – a thief and a traitor – Despised.

B)Tax collectors worked on Saturday so they broke the Sabbath – ungodly – nonreligious

C)That is who Levi had become.

But that is not who Levi always was! #2 Levi the Man!

A)Because his name was Levi – we can assume that He came from a religious background.

B)He is probably from the tribe of Levi – the priestly tribe – **so he could have Priest and Levites in his ancestry.**

1)Perhaps his dad worked in the priestly office.

C)Levi – will become known as Matthew the writer of the gospel of Matthew and we know from his writings that He knew God’s word.

D)He quotes from the **OT 99 times**- more than Mark, Luke and John combined.

E)He uses the phrase fulfilled as in Scripture being fulfilled by Jesus 38 times.

1)He is well acquainted with the OT Scriptures

He is also a man who uses the word hypocrisy in his gospel more than the entire Bible does.

A)Which I think gives us some insight into his heart – and the fact that **something turned him against the religious system in ISRAEL.**

B)Something forced him to go in another direction.

C)How many pp do we know like this today –Seen Something is not right in Christianity

1) seen some form of hypocrisy or perceived hypocrisy in the church.

CC)Christian TV – always begging for money – **the scandals** – made them think –I want no part of that . – Christians are all a bunch of hypocrites

D)It seems **Levi had a similar experience** with religion, it sent him in the opposite direction. –

1)It sent him on a course – **living purely for the here and now –**

E)For the **LOVE OF MONEY** he is willing to forsake his heritage, forsake his friends –

1)That is who Levi has become!

**But Jesus sees people differently – He doesn’t just see the crowd he sees the individual in the crowd
#3 Levi’s call.**

A)Mark tells us that Jesus walking by saw – Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office.

B)Luke tells us that Jesus saw a Publican –

C)Matthew in his gospel – tells us that **Jesus saw a Man!**

1)That is always the perception of Jesus! – He sees a man, a woman.

Big idea: Jesus sees people differently!

A) He doesn't see people as defined by their past – A lot of people are **defined by their past mistakes** –
Loser long enough – act that out.

B) He doesn't see people defined **by their persona** – A lot of people put on an act – they appear to be something other than what they really are.

1) They want people to think more highly of them – so they put on this facade

C) **Jesus sees through the façade**– He doesn't see people defined by their past.

1) He sees a man, a woman, a SOUL, A LIFE.

John 8 Jesus doesn't see a woman caught in adultery – He sees a woman who is lost – looking for love in all the wrong places

A) John 4 woman at the well – 5 broken relationships – Jesus sees a woman who is thirsty **for LIVING WATER.**

B) Jesus looks at people today and sees what we can become when our life is surrendered to Him.

C) How He Sees people in the Room right now!

1) Others – see you as a loser – screw up or too flawed

D) Others see you as a phony – a pretender

E) Jesus sees A MAN / A WOMAN – work in/ thru!

Centuries ago a number of workmen were seen dragging a great marble block into the city of Florence, Italy.

It had come from the famous marble quarries of Carrara, and was intended to be made into a statue of a great Old Testament prophet.

But it contained imperfections, and when the great sculptor Donatello saw it, he refused it at once. So there it lay in the cathedral yard, a useless block.

One day another sculptor caught sight of the flawed block. But as he examined it, there rose in his mind something of immense beauty, and he resolved to sculpt it.

For two years the artist worked feverishly on the work of art. **Finally, on January 25, 1504, the greatest artists of the day assembled to see what he had made of the despised and rejected block.**

Among them were Botticelli, Da Vinci, Perugino, the teacher of Raphael.

As the veil dropped to the floor, the statue was met with a chorus of praise. It was a masterpiece!

The succeeding centuries have confirmed that judgment.

Once a worthless piece of stone Michelangelo's *David* is one of the greatest works of art the world has ever known.

Jesus still sees men and women with his consummate artist's eye today.

A) The Scripture says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

B)He sees in us what no one else sees.

It seems that after his conversion – Levi becomes known as Matthew which means gift of God.

A)Jesus saw in the flawed life of Levi (a tax collector) a Matthew (a writer and evangelist).

B)Interesting we do not have a spoken word by Matthew recorded in all of the gospels,

1)We hear Peter say things – and James and John, Philipp, Thomas – but not Matthew

C) Nothing spoken is recorded – but in his writings he has touched our hearts

So Jesus is walking by –stops in front of Levi's tax office and says – Follow me – that was it – “He arose and Followed.”

A)Tells me this – **Levi knew something of Jesus-** Capernaum where Matthew worked was Jesus' headquarters

B.)Levi most likely watched at a distance

1)Saw something in Jesus – he had not seen in anyone else

C.)In fact it has been said you can tell a lot about a guy by who his enemies are

1)Levi watched how – Saducees – Pharisees The religious – hated Jesus

D)Levi – thought – all those guys who are hypocrites don't seem to like Jesus – so He must be doing something right!

Of all the disciples Levi gave up most.

A)He literally left all to follow Jesus. Peter and Andrew, James and John could go back to their boats.

B)There were always fish to catch and always the old trade to which to return; but Matthew burned his bridges completely.

1)With one action, in one moment of time, by one swift decision he had put himself out **of his job forever.**

C)He would not be able to get this Job back!

When Pastor Jim Denison was in college, he served as a summer missionary in East Malaysia. While there he attended a small church. At one of the church's worship services, a teenage girl came forward to announce her decision to follow Christ and be baptized.

During the service, Denison noticed some worn-out luggage leaning against the wall of the church building. He asked the pastor about it. The pastor pointed to the girl who had just been baptized and told him, "**Her father said that if she was baptized as a Christian she could never go home again. So she brought her luggage.**"

For Levi there was no turning back either – His life was going to be forever changed!

A)The call of Jesus to Levi that day is the same today

B)He says: Follow me ! – Radical Call

C)Jesus doesn't say: Hey check Me out – or try Me for a couple of weeks and see what you think.

1)Experiment with me!

That is precisely the problem with many people. They are experimenting with Jesus.

A)See if this Jesus thing works.

B)Problem is they are not truly following. – Not all in and therefore they never really experience the blessings of being in Christ.

C)My wife only likes to swim if the water is really warm.

1)Summer – pool – Solar heated – 83 degrees

D)Put her foot in “feels cold” = Just jump in babe.

1)Wade up to her stomach – shivering

Babe, it is not going to feel right until you are all in!

So too you will never really know the Joy of your sins being forgiven – guilt removed – the blessing of what it means to be in Christ – until ALL IN!

A)Jesus is calling some of you here today – Turn from your sin –and follow Him.

(**Opportunity to make that decision**)

B)calling others of you – half hearted commitment – to really follow Him

1)To be Fully surrendered to Him today.

(**Opportunity to make that decision**)

And Some people He calls to a radical work

A)Levi would never be a tax collector again – but Jesus had something better for him.

B)Seen people from this fellowship – called by Jesus to leave their lives and families – **creature comforts of living in America –**

2)Go to a foreign land.

C)Leave a nice paying job – comfortable lifestyle and to enter into full time ministry and live on a lot less.

D)Today Calling some to forsake creature comforts and go to a foreign land

E)Notice when Jesus called Levi and He immediately arose and Followed Jesus.

#4 Levi's Witness

A)Luke in his gospel gives us some detail into what Happened next – Luke 5:29 Levi hosted a great banquet for Jesus at his House. Costly!

B)Our text says – **many tax collectors and sinners there dining with Jesus**

1)Levi evidently had a big house because it is packed out with the worst of the worst – there.

B)Jesus was called the friend of sinners – **he wasn't afraid to hang out in settings like this.**

C)But understand what is happening here – this is not the regular drunken bash these guys were used to going to.

Jesus is the main attraction here: This was Levi's way of saying to all his friends Follow me as I follow Him !

A) I am following Jesus – and I want you to meet Him too!

B) Levi is making an opportunity for his friends – to come face to face with Jesus like He did.

C) I say that because – some pp think – I am going to go hang out old parties –

1) Wonder why they get tangled in old sins

D) Different setting here – (Still a rough crowd)

The religious leaders looked at this and thought – how can he do that how can he eat with them –

A) In that culture – eating with someone was a bonding experience

B) Dip your bread in the same sauce bowl – ONE

C) The religious leaders looked at this crowd with contempt – Sinners

Been said:

Salesman also looking for a sale
tax collector – a buck
prostitute – a client

D.) Pharisee – a fault! Twig in someone's eye - sin sniffers

E) Is that a good description of you! – Looking for a fault?

Note this: The religious leaders were the only pp that Jesus looked at with contempt

A) Saw sinners and lost people with compassion

C) Remember what it was like to be lost?

1) See a lost child – crying – my heart breaks

D) Lost people – **Lost in sin, lost in luxury, lost in materialism, lost in sex or drugs**

1) Do you remember that –

How do you see people?

A) Religious leaders viewed them with contempt –

B) And they also viewed them as **being contaminated** – and so they felt – if we eat with them we will become like them.

C) Big idea – Jesus not only saw individuals in the crowd –

D) Jesus not only saw people differently – saw a man a woman – not their baggage

Big idea: Jesus also saw himself differently – V. 17
“When Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

A) Jesus saw Himself as the great Physician { People were sick and in need of a doctor

Aa)Disease called sin – that is what made them pursue these substitutes

B)Came to die – remedy

C)Jesus wants us to see ourselves differently – Holding the remedy

We know what this world needs

A)Jesus was a missionary – In John’s gospel – 20 times Jesus says –the Father has sent Me –

B)But then He says –As the Father has sent Me – I am sending you!

Go into all the world

C)Missionaries to NC SD – Missionary to your work

Don’t isolate ourselves

History records that when Oliver Cromwell ruled England, the nation experienced a crisis: They ran out of silver and could not mint any coins. Cromwell sent his soldiers to the Cathedral to see if any silver was available.

They reported back that the only silver was **the statues of the saints**, to which Cromwell replied, “Melt down the saints and get them back into circulation.”

Sometimes God must do that with us.

A)We must be melted down so that we will get into circulation in the world for Him.

B)Reach out to pp we work with. ‘

1)Go to lunch – build relationships

C)YOU HAVE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

1)You have what the world is craving for.

One last thing:

A)Jesus says He is the great Physician / come for the sick – profound statement.

B)A person needs to realize they are sick before they can really follow Jesus.

C)World doesn’t hold the answer

Turn sin

All in !