

Study Guide: Jesus the Physician

Carter Sanger, Jan-10

Introduction

Read Mark 2:13-17.

In this passage we get a picture of two worlds normally apart that are brought together by Jesus' actions, the Pharisees and the "tax collectors and sinners."

- Where can you see worlds today that don't mix?
- Have you known any marriages like this?

I. The Question

Read verses 15-16. It helps to know something about the Pharisees to better appreciate the contrast between Jesus and them. The Pharisees were respected Jews among the people, known for their dedication to God's law and the traditions passed down. They longed to see the people set free from foreign rule and sought to prepare the way for God's messiah.

- What is your impression of the Pharisees' question?
- Why was a tax collector so despised by the people?
- Why were the Pharisees so surprised, and appalled, that Jesus was eating with the crowd mentioned?
- What does this suggest about their approach to preparing Israel for the messiah?

II. The Answer

Read verse 17 and Jesus' response.

- Jesus' reference to sickness and doctor would have resonated as a given to the audience, as it does to us. How sick are you before you will actually go see a doctor? What measures do you take first?

Jesus statement that he came to call *not* the righteous but the sinner was shocking. The Old Testament explains that Israel went into exile in the first place because they had failed to keep God's law. Thus, the presumption that for God to rescue them from their oppressors they needed to right the ship and get the nation to be more faithful to God. In their view, God would send a savior for the righteous that would save them from the Romans.

- Since the Pharisees were correct in their assessment as to why Israel was sent into exile in the first place (because of their sin), what does Jesus' answer suggest about the root of the problem?
- From what has Jesus' come to set the people free?
- Does this negate the Pharisees expectation that the savior would set people free from the Romans (or in modern day experience, some other external oppressor)?
- What has been your prescription for expecting/hoping that God will accept you?

III. The Call

Read verses 13-14.

- When Levi got up and followed, what was he giving up? How sick must he have seen himself to set aside his tax collecting?
- Why was it so hard for the Pharisees to follow Jesus? What would they have had to give up?
- What is it in your life that would be hard to give up in order to follow Jesus? How sick do you see yourself when it comes to spiritual fitness?
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Wrap-up

- If you are to follow Jesus, where do you find him? What might that look like today?