

## 2.6.Ca(10).Physician: Calls Sinners to Repent. Mark 2:13-17.

### Read Mark 2:13-17.

<sup>17</sup> 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.**” 2:17

For God did **not** send his **Son** into the world to **condemn** the world, but in order that the world might be **saved** through him. John 3:17

## Background:

To understand the reality of life in a particular realm, we must start first by knowing the heart of its king. In this story of Jesus encountering a new group of friends who are seen by the world as sinners and outcasts, we see in the heart-felt, warm welcome he give to these outcasts the true nature of this coming Kingdom of Heaven.

Watching Jesus welcome these sinners and outcasts, the religious leaders scoff at the welcome he is wasting on these low-status misfits.

As we consider in this passage the crucial question: who is the kingdom for? And, “what must I abandon” in order to live and assimilate into life in the Kingdom?

This passage highlights the core difference between the Kingdom and fleshly religion. Between the welcoming heart of its eternal king and the condemning hearts of Israel's religious leaders. The latter, seeking to preserve the sanctity of their religious community, seeking to keep the unworthy on the outside.

However, the Lord Jesus has an entirely different goal for the House and Kingdom he is building. In his House, sinners are welcomed and the weak are embraced as long lost children returning home! Sinners are welcomed into this new House and Kingdom, but they must first repent and forsake their own lives

In contrast, the *Judaism* practiced by these religious leaders was exclusive. It separated the world into the "good" and the "unworthy," based on the standards of Jewish standards and customs.

This exclusion allowed them to serve as the gatekeepers, identifying the “good” people and judging others as falling short, unclean, and kept apart.

Thus, we see that Jesus Mashiach has an entirely different goal. Realizing that *all* people need to be redeemed and released from their enslavement to sin, he freely welcomes all who are broken and burdened to come to him for relief and new life!

As we shall see, this model is what the Kingdom of God is meant to be—life given to all freely to populate a kingdom of the Living.

Jesus, as the epitome, the Firstborn Son of the Jewish people, incarnates who Israel is meant to be—not race of fault-finding gatekeepers turning away the masses, but the picture of the Jew beloved and trusted by all the world, the picture

of the renowned Jewish doctor. Skilled, life-saving, and welcoming with open arms all who need to be relieved of their burdens!



### Focus:

1. Welcomes Needy: sinners and outcasts. 2:13-15
2. Wellness is Goal of Physician: not judgment. 2:16
3. Walking with Lord in wholeness: Calling. 2:17

### Consider:

This story that you will read starts with Levi's conversion. Levi, a tax collector and presumably

of the tribe of the Levitical priesthood, starts to follow Jesus as his Mashiach and does what comes naturally—he throws a dinner for Jesus and invites all of his associates and friends to meet Jesus! What a vivid picture of the Kingdom as a place of discovering new life—who can help but to share this goodness with those most beloved in our lives?

Tellingly, this celebration of new life provides a clear contrast between the natural, free, *home-coming* vibe of the Kingdom as it baffles accustomed to fleshly religion. And, this contrast revolves around the uncomfortable question, “What do do with the sinners?”

The Kingdom’s response is easy, because the wisdom of God reveals the true state of the world. In this world of “darkness” and “the shadow of death.” The cursed serpent dominates all the

earth's people as *sin*—the selfish actions of the flesh opposed to God—ensnares their lives and keeps them from God's rule and kingdom. Some sins are blatant in their lawless flagrancy, and the lives of Levi's guests were clearly *defiled* by their obvious sinning. But, some sins hide well in good company, taking root in the heart, and these sins grow mainly from our *fleshly nature of unbelief*- to seek to control and Self-rule our lives, even couching our resistance to God's presence and Lordship using the very language of Torah Law. So, when these religious leaders rely on their own Self-righteousness in the presence of these flagrant sinners, they also, like Job, are guilty before God of the insulting falsehood to think that man can be righteous by his own works apart from the redemption and mercy of the Lord God.

# 1. Welcomes Needy: sinners and outcasts. 2:13-15

What is the attitude of Jesus Mashiach toward these “tax collectors” and “sinners” (2:15) whose lives were clearly not honoring God at the moment? Notice that Jesus does not tolerate them nor put on a pleasant face but inwardly burn with disgust and contempt and these “sinners”? Rather, as “the Son of Man,” the One of all of us who can really help our brokenness, Jesus instead actually “reclines” with them to share a meal—a humble and trusting act that shows the true welcome of *hospitality* and *friendship*.

To explain why the Mashiach, sent by God into the world, behaves this way, we must understand the purpose of his mission. God did not send Jesus into the world as a kind of *auditor*, compiling a record of offenses which would justify some later judgment. As the Scriptures say, God did not

send his Son into the world to “condemn” the world but to “save it” (John 3:17).

Yes, Jesus understands the *defiling sin* which has left its crippling mark on these sinners now sharing a meal with him. But, his purpose is not to entrap and cast them aside but to heal them. It is this hope of healing, this promise of a future kingdom thriving with the *spiritually alive*, which moves the heart of Jesus.

As a disciple of this Mashiach, be sure that your heart beats with the same purpose as his. Knowing that the only fellowship you will share in the Kingdom is with brothers and sisters who were dead in their sins but are now alive, who were lost in their own Self-important delusions but now see clearly to gaze gratefully upon the face of their Savior. There is grace and healing for all, for all

were once dead in sin, whether or the people around them realize the depravity or not.

## 2. Wellness is Goal of Physician: not judgment.

### 2:16

So, as Jesus and his disciples eat with their friends, this Kingdom hospitality strikes the eyes of the religious leaders as shameful impropriety. They whisper, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Again, as disciples of the Kingdom of God, we must no longer view sin from the eyes of our religious tendencies. Human religion, by design, uses the label of “sin” as a means of control. The justification to belittle and dismiss our fellow human beings. To persecute. To abuse and manipulate. To create different categories of people—the “holy” and the “damned.”

But the Kingdom only sees people as either the “alive” or those “needing life.” Those “free,” and those “needing to be freed of their sin bondage” that they too may enter the Kingdom. As “brothers” and “not yet brothers.”

So, Jesus explains how he, as the World’s Redeemer, as the Firstborn Son sent to bring *all* the children safely home, sees this “sin.” Not as an opportunity to boast over the unfortunate, but to view them as their *needed physician* (2:17).

Jesus speaks as what we would later recognize as the prototypical Jewish doctor. For some reason, Jewish doctors are known and preferred not necessarily for their *sharp insight, their intolerance for substandard care, nor for their exemplary skill*. Rather, collectively, Jewish doctors seem fierce advocates of life itself, and they will *doggedly fight* for the life of their

patients, as if holding a personal grudge and *generational feud with death itself*.

This is how Jesus, the physician, feels toward these sinners. He will fight for their lives, even losing his that they may live. To say they are sinners is simply to state an obvious truth. They are indeed “sick” in their sins, so they need a doctor to “call the sinners” to leave death and come to life (17).

May we be such advocates for life. I personally look forward to the day when the Jewish people leave their “religion” for the life of the Kingdom, and legions of Jewish “doctors” of the Kingdom are unleashed on the world’s sick masses!

### 3. Walking with Lord in wholeness: Calling. 2:17.

At this point, you may be thinking that Levi had an advantage over us, who are separated from the Lord’s physical presence by two millennia.

However, by faith, know that it is we who have the advantage. Now that the Lord Jesus has been raised, he sends out his disciples as if we are trauma teams sent out into this world's carnage. We bring the presence of our Lord with us, for when "two are three are gathered in my name, I am there with them" (Matthew 18:20) he says to us. Like Levi, may we gather our needy friends and family as if to specialized wards of a hospital. For those brutalized by sin, let them gather in *places of urgent care*, being comforted and forgiven as they meet with our Lord. For those battling brokenness, suffering from diseases needing excision, or afflicted by invasive virulents, let them all come to Jesus for healing and life!

**Case study: Levi-dinner.**

In graduate school in Hawaii, my fellow disciples and I decided to host free dinners to invite

anyone would come. We posted signs simply saying, "Come and eat!" We had no agenda for these dinners. But, as children of the Kingdom, we simply thanked the Lord for the food given to us and prayed that He bring his blessings and kingdom to everyone who joined us! We did our part, and the Lord Jesus showed up! In conversations across the years, the Lord started to work in hard hearts, to reveal needs that we would pray for, and make himself known. A dozen became disciples and dozens repent of their atheism to believe in God! One woman, a staunch atheist and doctoral student in the biological sciences at first refused to eat with us. But, sitting with me after a few months, she simply asked, "So what is this Jesus-thing all about?" She became a disciple soon after! Have dinner, invite your friends, and pray for the Lord Jesus to join you! We had one rule: come

and eat, but for your first time, you are not allowed to bring any food. We just want you to be blessed! Our friends would eventually bring food, and they'd bring other friends too!

### Question:

### Further Discovery:

The Jewish people have long been enthralled by their Judaism, a religion which they admittedly formulated through their own “oral Torah,” as if God’s Word was not sufficient in itself.

The Scriptures are clear. One day, Israel will look upon Jesus Mashiach, and immediately, they will abandon their Judaism for the reality of the Kingdom (Zechariah 12:10-14).

But, Israel's greatest unspoken fear will never materialize. Their distinct position before God will not be erased. Rather, once Israel embraces its place in the Kingdom of Jesus Mashiach, its people will realize that the Kingdom does not obliterate their life as a family, it honors it by placing them first among the nations.

The Lord God has never abandoned the family of Adam, the generations of Noah and his sons. Rather, his plan has always been to Redeem all his family home to himself through his appointed Firstborn among the families of the nations. As God's Firstborn Son of the other families of earth (Exodus 4:22), Israel has:

- Become the House from which the Mashiach is raised up as a Seed of David for the world's redemption.

- Received the Right and Responsibility to bring Redemption to the world. As a result, it has suffered a period of testing and alienation from Mashiach that all the other families of the Earth might come into the Kingdom first.
- Been Tested through all its generations, as Job was tested, that it would be freed from the insidious ruin of *fleshly religion* and *Self-Righteousness* so that it will forever be the Seat of Jesus Mashiach's eternal rule. This is why the Church was always temporary, not having been tested so that the roots of fleshly religion eventually terminated the Church Age.

Once Israel takes its place as the Firstborn Son of all the families of the Earth in the Kingdom of God, it will be honored as the World's Redeemer.

But, as long as Israel clings to its own Fleshly Religion, Judaism, it will stand alone as it separates from all of earth's nations.

