

Exegetical Notes, Mark 2:13-17
“First Wrong Words, Now Wrong People”
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Mark 2:13-17

Verse 13

Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.

- Jesus went for a walk on the beach beside the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him. He took the opportunity and began to teach them.

Verse 14

As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

- As Jesus walked and taught the crowd, he came across a man named Levi, also called Matthew in the Bible. The man was a Jew, the son of Alphaeus. Alphaeus is also the father of the Apostle James (see 3:18). This would make Levi and James brothers.
- Levi worked as a tax collector for the Roman government. To “good Jews” this would have made him a Roman sympathizer. All “good Jews” would have shunned him.
- Jesus invited Levi to “follow him.” This was an invitation to become Jesus’ disciple.
- Levi accepted the invitation by leaving his work to follow Jesus.

Verse 15

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and “sinners” were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

- Levi invited Jesus home for dinner. Along with Jesus and his disciples, many of Levi’s friends also came to his home to have dinner with Jesus. Because no “good Jew” would have anything to do with a

- tax collector, Levi had made friends among those “good Jews” called sinners.
- At Levi’s house, Jesus and his disciples were eating with people who were unacceptable to the religious people of the day.

Verse 16

When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the “sinners” and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

- The teachers of the law were watching Jesus from the crowd. They were offended that he would associate with the wrong kind of people.
- They asked Jesus’ disciples why Jesus would associate with this bad crowd. Apparently, they were attempting to discourage the disciples from following Jesus by pointing out his error.

Verse 17

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- Overhearing the conversation between the teachers of the law and his disciples, Jesus spoke to them...both to the teachers of the law and his disciples.
- In response, he explained that his mission was not to encourage good people. He had come to reach out to those who did not know God and to bring them to Him. This was his mission, his vision of ministry.
- Interestingly enough, Jesus used the word that the teachers of the law had been using, “sinners.” Since all of us, without exception, are sinners, Jesus calls the teachers of the law, too. He calls all sinners into a deeper relationship with the Father.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *First Wrong Words, Now Wrong People*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen*. They are used here by permission.)