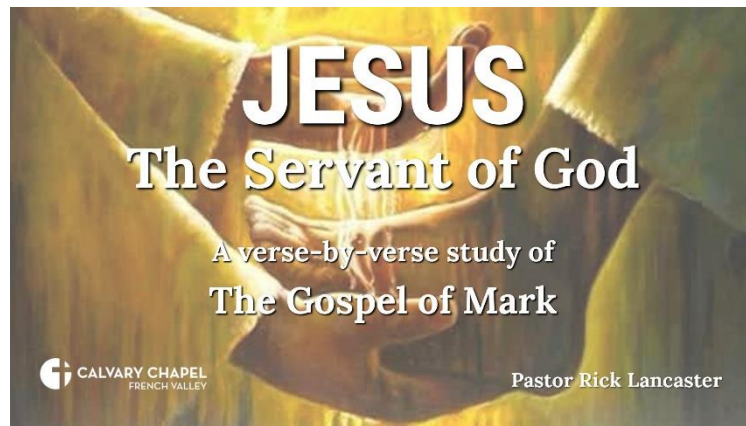




JESUS: The Servant of God

A verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel is for Sinners

Mark 2:13-17

Message #5

Sermon given on October 26, 2025



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel is for Sinners

Mark 2:13-17

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Mark 2**
- Today, we begin a series through the gospel of Mark – **JESUS: The Servant of God**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel is for Sinners**
- Before we get into the text for today, I would like you to imagine the kind of person you would be least likely to want to associate with.
- The kind of person you don't want to be around.
- The kind of person you would not invite into your home, and you would not accept an invitation to go to their home.
- Jesus has an encounter with a man in our text that is, according to his culture, one of those kinds of people.
- Jesus' interaction with Him should challenge us to examine our attitudes toward those kinds of people.
- Last time, we had the account of the four men who bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed.
- They can't get to Jesus, so they go up onto the roof and dig through and let their friend down into the room in front of Jesus.
- Jesus sees their faith and then does something unexpected – He forgives the man of his sins.
- Jesus dealt with the man's greatest need which was restoration back into a right relationship with God and then He dealt with his physical need.
- The scribes, the religious guys, accuse Jesus of blasphemy because only God can forgive sins.
- Jesus then says, I'll prove to you that I have the authority to forgive sins by healing this man of his paralysis, which He does.
- Jesus is making it clear to them who He is.

- If only God can forgive sins, and only God can heal someone of the paralysis this man had, by healing him Jesus is declaring He is the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God.
- Everyone is amazed and then Mark moves on to the next thing.
- **Mark 2:13-14**
- Jesus said to Levi, “Follow Me”, and he left everything and did.
- Levi is familiar to us by another name – Matthew, the writer of the first gospel.
- The first four disciples named were fishermen.
- Fishing was an honest trade and noble work.
- Not so with the tax collectors like Matthew.
- The Romans had conquered Israel and demanded tribute from them.
- Jews were hired to collect taxes give them to the Romans.
- They were notorious for dishonesty and corruption.
- Socially, they were on the same level as prostitutes.
- Though most liked the prostitutes more than the tax collectors.
- Verse 14 says Jesus ‘saw’ Levi.
- Jesus didn’t see a despised tax collector.
- He saw a man created in the image of God, called by the Father to carry the light of the gospel out into the world. **Ephesians 2:10**
- ¹⁰ **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**
- Jesus could see past who Matthew was to the man He had created him to be.
- Jesus did that with each of us.
- We should praise God that He didn’t choose us based on who we are but based on what His Son did for us.
- Maybe you weren’t as bad as Levi, maybe you were worse.
- To Jesus that makes no difference.
- He would then encourage us to look at all people the same way; not as they are, but as they could be for Christ.
- Jesus says, ‘Follow Me.’ and Levi does.
- Levi responds to the invitation of Christ with an invitation of His own.
- **Mark 2:15**

- Luke's gospel says that Levi gave a feast for Jesus and the disciples with Jesus as the guest of honor.
- Levi also invited everyone associated with him who would accept an invitation from a despised tax collector – other people despised by the culture.
- In that culture, sharing a meal is a sign of trust and fellowship.
- There is a phrase there that we don't want to miss, and they followed Him.
- The 'Him' is Jesus.
- Many tax collectors and sinners followed Jesus.
- The word 'followed' has the meaning of being His disciples.
- Jesus has something they recognize that they need.
- This feast is not being held in a closed venue, and others see it and are not pleased.
- **Mark 2:16**
- We saw the scribes earlier in Mark's gospel.
- They are the religious experts in the Law of Moses.
- The Pharisees are a religious sect of Judaism that believes in strict adherence to the Law of Moses.
- They had identified 613 laws in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.
- You often find these two groups together.
- The scribes interpret the Law, and the Pharisees follow the Law.
- Levi and his tax collector and sinner associates were following Jesus.
- The scribes and Pharisees are following Jesus too, but only to see if they can catch Him doing something wrong.
- Jesus, the Perfect Law-giver cannot break the Law, but He will show them how they have interpreted the Law wrongly.
- The scribes and the Pharisees are struggling to understand why Jesus is fellowshiping with those people.
- Jesus responds with a proverb, which He immediately interprets for them and us.
- **Mark 2:17**

- Jesus is making a distinction between those who are inside Levi's house and those who are outside looking in.
 - The tax collectors and sinners know what they are; they were sinners.
 - They knew their lives were not in alignment with the Law of Moses because the scribes and Pharisees kept telling them they weren't.
 - They knew their lives were not pleasing to God.
 - Most of them probably felt helpless to do anything about it.
 - Life and circumstances forced them into a pit they felt they couldn't ever climb out of.
 - Someone needed to rescue them.
 - And then Jesus comes along. **Romans 5:6-8**
- ⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
- ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- The tax collectors and sinners were sick; they were sick with sin.
 - They are the ones who need a physician; they are the ones who need to be saved.
 - But there is also something convicting and tragic about what Jesus says here.
 - He is saying, "I didn't come for you, the righteous."
 - The scribes and the Pharisees believed they were righteous based on their strict adherence to the Law of Moses.
 - There is a big problem with that belief. **Romans 3:10**
- ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one..."
- One of the primary lessons of the book of Romans is that the law cannot make anyone righteous.
 - The scribes and Pharisees were claiming righteousness from how they were living.
 - The problem with that is the righteousness that pleases God must come from outside of our sinful flesh. **Isaiah 64:6**
- ⁶ But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.
- The scribes and Pharisees believed they were right with God based on what they were doing.

- Salvation is possible when someone realizes there is nothing we can do to save ourselves; we need a Savior.
- Jesus spoke to another tax collector, Zacchaeus. **Luke 19:9-10**
⁹ And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
- The gospel is for sinners; for people who sense they are lost and hopeless to save themselves.
- The righteous, those who believe are right with God through their own effort, have no use for the gospel.
- It is hard to save someone who doesn’t believe they need to be saved.
- Or they believe they can save themselves.
- Jesus came to save sin-sick people of this world.
- If you are here, or watching online, you are probably one of the ones He healed.
- Jesus saved you and now you are righteous, not your own righteousness, but His.
- As believers, we must be diligent to guard our hearts from becoming like the scribes and Pharisees and viewing the lost in the world as tax collectors and sinners.
- The only thing that makes us different from them is that Jesus saved us.
- He wants to save them too, and make them like us, sinners saved by grace.
- Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.
- But the primary channel Jesus will use to reach the lost are those He has saved. **Matthew 28:18-20**

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- Jesus saved you because He loves you.
- He saved you so that you could know and experience the love of God.
- But He also gave you a mission to help others know and experience God’s love through faith in Christ Jesus.
- I am about to say something that might be hard for someone to hear.

- If you are unwilling to share your faith with others, you probably need to learn to love God more.
- I love my wife, Kelly.
- How do you know I love my wife?
- Does the fact that I wear a wedding ring say I love my wife? Not really?
- You can watch my life and see me loving her.
- You can hear it in the things I say about her.
- You would know it based on the things I don't do that would hurt, offend, or betray her.
- Love isn't really love if it doesn't influence how we live our lives for the lost world to see.
- Jesus talked about the most important thing we can do in this life.

Matthew 22:35-40

³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question*, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ “Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*’ ” ³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second *is* like it: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ ” ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- The more I love God, the more I want others to love God.
- I believe every Christ-follower should have a goal to help at least one person meet their Savior Christ Jesus.
- That's what loving God looks like.
- And if you are blessed to help someone meet Jesus, your next goal should be to help one more.
- A regular prayer of mine is summarized by the phrase, ‘Just one more.’
- I don't need to bring the whole world to faith in Christ; I want to reach just one more.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to love God more and to show it by reaching out to the tax collectors and sinners and inviting them to meet Jesus.
- **Pray – Last Song**