

Sermon Discussion Guide

The Scandal of Grace

Mark 2:13–17

Overview

Jesus calls Levi, a despised tax collector, to be his disciple. Jesus' choice of Levi was shocking, but what he does next causes a major scandal: he dines with many tax collectors and sinners at Levi's home. The self-righteous Pharisees are offended that Jesus would share a meal with such people. His table fellowship with sinners symbolizes welcome and acceptance. Jesus silences the Pharisees by revealing that he has come to call sinners into the kingdom. Those who acknowledge their sinfulness and turn to Jesus in faith are welcomed into the kingdom. Those who think they're righteous and don't need a Savior are excluded. This is the scandal of grace.

Discussion Questions

Isa. 25:6–9; Luke 18:9–14; Rom. 3:9–20; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:4–11

- Why was Jesus' choice of Levi so shocking? How were tax collectors viewed by Jewish society?
- Who were the Pharisees? How did they view themselves?
- Why were the Pharisees scandalized by Jesus' table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners?
- There's a reversal in the story: those who thought they were insiders in the kingdom (i.e. welcomed by God) because of their efforts to be righteous are excluded from the feast at Levi's house. Those who were considered outsiders because of their sinfulness are welcomed to dine with Jesus. Does that seem unfair to you? Why?
- Do you tend to relate to God like a Pharisee? How?
- How would your life look if you understood that God welcomes those who have nothing to offer him and gives them all the righteousness they need in Jesus Christ?