

Title: Need of the Physician

Text: Mark 2: 13-17

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Mark 2: 14: And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

What did we just witness? With two words, we just witnessed the Lord Jesus heal Levi. With two words, we just witnessed the Lord Jesus make Levi into his true disciple.

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is “The Physician.” Jehovah-Rapha—“I am the LORD that healeth thee.” Christ said, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted...” (Is 61: 1)

It says, “When he passed by, he saw Levi...” When he walked this earth every step Christ took was to “pass by” his sin-dead, sin-sick people for the purpose of healing them. He took no step in vain.

On purpose, “As he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew...And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.” (Mk 1: 16-20)

On purpose, he came to a man with an unclean spirit. Christ commanded the unclean spirit to hold his peace and come out of him and the unclean spirit obeyed and came out. (Mk 1: 23-28)

On purpose, Christ drew a leper to him, who came bowed down, beseeching him, “If thou wilt thou canst make me clean.” Christ said, “I will, be thou clean.” And Christ healed him. (Mk 1: 40-42)

On purpose, he passed into Capernaum. He drew men who brought a man on a stretcher who was sick of palsy. Christ spoke, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” “Arise, take up thy bed and walk.” “And immediately he arose.” (Mk 2: 1-12)

Then on purpose, he came here to Levi. Levi was a publican—a tax collector. For every dollar he collected for the rulers, he collected two for himself. His sickness was worst of all—covetousness. He loved money. Levi was a well-known, despised, sinner. But with two words, “Follow me”—the great Physician made him whole. Luke said, “He left all” then “he arose and followed him.” (Lu 5: 28; Mk 2: 14)

Then Levi/Matthew made a feast at his house and invited many of his former friends: publicans and sinners, to come and hear Christ his Savior preach.

Mark 2: 15: And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in [Levi’s] house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

These were well-known, despised, sin-sick sinners: publicans, harlots, all kinds of sinners. The Lord Jesus at the same table right beside these sinners, along with his disciples.

All those Christ sought out and healed were sinners. Sinners too helpless to heal themselves. The Lord Jesus never turned away a single sinner seeking mercy. So there he sits with all these sinners.

But someone was nearby watching this meal. They were offended at this sight of Christ eating with sinners.

Mark 2: 16: And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

The scribes and Pharisee's were well-known also. They were well-known for religious works, for being the most pious, most moral. They looked down their noses on everyone who was not as righteous as they saw themselves.

I wonder how they said this. It appears as if it turned their stomachs to see him sitting so closely with these sinners—"How IS IT"—how can he even stomach sitting there so closely—"eating and drinking with publicans and sinners." Perhaps they were saying—"How is it"—that he can let himself be seen—"eating and drinking with publicans and sinners." It is certain they meant this—"How is it"—that instead of preferring the company of righteous men like us, he is "eating and drinking with publicans and sinners" like them. The LORD tells us how he regards such a spirit, "Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." Is 65: 5) At that dinner in Levi's house, the Lord Jesus said this:

Mark 2: 17: When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of THE Physician, but they that are sick: I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Try to put yourself in a particular place: imagine, right now, you have a fatal disease. Imagine, right now, you are on your deathbed. Imagine, you are a few short breathes from standing before the all-knowing God in judgment. Would you need Christ? Would you hang on his every word as this gospel is preached?

It is true of everyone hearing me now. You have a fatal disease called sin. You are on the verge of death. You are a few short breathes from meeting God. Unless you have Christ you will perish forever!

The problem is most do not believe this. No matter how healthy we are, we are sinners. "Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die." Very soon we will die and meet God.

The one reason men do not cry out to Christ Jesus for mercy is because they have no need of Christ; only true sinners need Christ.

Christ says, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick." Whole people do not go to the doctor. Whole people do not call for an ambulance. Only those who are sick.

Churches today use every marketing gimmick under the sun to fill pews and keep them filled. Can you imagine emergency rooms using the same gimmicks to entice folks to come to the emergency room! They do not have to because sick people know their need of a physician.

The reason so few need Christ is that most think they are whole, righteous, with no need. But will you hear Christ? He said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." This will be the phrase we will focus on.

I CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS

First, Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous."

Christ said this to the scribes and Pharisee. He said it to self-made religious men who thought they were righteous because of something they had done. They were self-righteous, self-wise, self-holy. They would not come to Christ that they might be saved.

If men say they are sinners, most do not mean what God means by "sinners." Most think they can give themselves spiritual life and believe on Christ whenever they choose. Most think they can make themselves holy—by changing their outward behavior. Most think they can make themselves more holy by outward behavior. Most think they can make themselves righteous by keeping God's law. If men say they do need Christ, most only need Christ to make up for their shortcomings.

Yet, these are all vain thoughts. Such men do not see their need of Christ. So Christ says, "They that are whole have no need of the physician,..." It is not our sin that keeps us from Christ. It is our so-called righteousness.

I CAME TO CALL SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

Now, let's focus on the second word Christ declares. He said, "I came to call sinners to repentance."

Who has need of Christ? "They that are sick"—true sinners. He said in Matthew 9:13, "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Christ did not come to merely help righteous folks complete their own sacrifices of righteousness. Mercy means salvation must be entirely of God's mercy. We can add no sacrifice, no work, of our own to mercy. Salvation has to be all of mercy, all of grace and none of works.

Romans 11: 5: Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6: And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

So when he says he came to save sinners, Christ means he came to save lost, dead, helpless, entirely ruined—true sinners! Sinners who can in no way, at any time, at any point, help themselves.

1 Timothy 1:15: This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

A true sinner is in every way, helpless to help himself. A true sinners is unholy. He has a dead, corrupt nature. He is unable to make himself alive and holy.

A true sinner is unrighteous. He is a breaker of the law of God. He is unable to make himself righteous, unable to justify himself from his sins.

A true sinner is in bondage under the curse of the law and by his own sin-nature. He is unable to redeem himself from the curse of the law. He is unable to even to believe and rest in Christ.

Be sure to get this. A true sinner needs Christ to be all and in all. Mercy means Christ came to be the only and all our Wisdom, the only and all our Righteousness, the only and all our Holiness and the only and all our Redemption. He came to be the complete Salvation of his people. His people are sinners who deserve nothing in ourselves but condemnation.

Romans 5:19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

The God of mercy is exalted and praised and glorified in the salvation of his people because mercy means those being saved are entirely guilty and full of sin, except God the Father send his Son and Christ by his obedience makes us righteous and holy in him.

Listen to how the covenant of mercy exalts God, "I will be merciful to [what] their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb 8: 12)

Listen to how grace to the guilty exalts the Son of God our Redeemer, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (Jn 1: 17) Paul said, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 5: 20-21)

But mercy and grace cannot be given to those who are just, it is given only to guilty sinners. Grace excludes all merit Mercy prohibits any goodness in its object. Christ is the Fountain open—not to clean your big toe or get a little

smudge off your elbows—but the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. Mercy is for those that only the great Physician can heal—those who:

Isaiah 1: 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment....13: Bring no more vain oblations;...15:...when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood....18: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19: If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

And Christ makes us willing and obedient in the day of his power—to believe and rest in him. By saying, “Follow me!” Like he did to Levi.

What I am declaring to you is the gifts of mercy are not by any good in us or any works in us. Eternal life is given to the spiritually dead; spiritual sight is given to the spiritually blind; liberty is given to the captives; cleansing is for the defiled; forgiveness of sin is free for the guilty. These gifts are freely given by grace; not a wage earned by the sinner.

Christ is All and every Part of salvation from beginning to end. Christ is both the Author and the Finisher of our faith. We do not begin in Christ by faith then go back to the law and our works. When Christ gives his command to the sinner it is never, “Come, I will carry part of your load, if you carry the rest.” Christ says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11: 28)

The moment we look to ourselves for anything we cease resting in Christ. But Christ will not allow his people to turn from faith in him alone. He keeps us resting in him by the same power that made us rest in him in the beginning so that we are saved by his life not by our life.

Romans 5: 6: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7: For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

When it comes to earthly physicians, we have specialists. No man is capable of having knowledge to know every part and every cure. But Christ is the Great Physician who himself is the cure of every sin. He makes his child every whit whole. His precious blood justifies his people of all our sins. He himself is the righteousness of God and the righteousness of his people. With Christ abiding in us we have that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord—it is Christ we follow when we follow after Holiness. Christ is the Wisdom that gives us the Mind of Christ to know all things by knowing Christ is All! The simplicity of Christ is Christ himself! Are you hearing the great Preacher speak his healing Power, say to you, “Follow me!” He cures inwardly with that word!

WHICH ARE YOU?

Lastly, answer this question. Which one are you? Whole or sick? Righteous or a sinner? Christ said, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Christ called Levi, the sinner. He called other publicans and sinners. Christ made them know their need of Christ. Therefore, they believed and followed him.

But the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees who thought themselves worthy and righteous by their works, who were not teachable because they knew it all, who would not shut their mouths and be taught of Wisdom himself, Christ left alone! They had no need of the great Physician; they hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks; they did not want Christ so Christ gave them what they wanted. Christ left them alone so that they died in their sins and went to hell.

Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Which are you? Which am I? Here is how you know. If you can do anything to save yourself at any point from now till you reach glory then you think you are righteous and worthy in yourself and you do not think you need Christ. Christ did not come to call the righteous.

But if you are totally helpless, in need of Christ to do all, Christ said, "I came to call sinners to repentance." In fact, if you know that about yourself, Christ is already calling you to repentance.

Repent from what? From you! From your ignorance you thought was wisdom; from your self-righteous works you thought made you righteousness; from your self-sanctifying works you thought made you holy and from your bondage you called liberty. Repent from you and believe on Christ and never look anywhere else but Christ and thou shalt be saved. That is what real, bona-fide, Holy Spirit-taught sinners do! Christ saves sinners!

Amen!