

Q8. On a number of occasions Jesus operates with a noticeable pattern.

1. Jesus performs a revolutionary action
2. The Pharisees or the scribes criticize or grumble against him
3. Jesus makes a pronouncement by which they are silenced

Can you see this pattern in Mark 2:13-17?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Mark 2:1-12?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Jesus was a very determined and sharp operator who made the most of every ministry opportunity. What can we learn from Jesus' passion for mission?

Studies in Mark's Gospel

The Best News Ever

4. Jesus Christ : Friend of Sinners

Mark 2:13-17

This is the second in the set of five early accounts (Mark 2:1-3:10) of conflicts Jesus had with the Scribes and Pharisees (the establishment). Possibly due to their influence, the synagogues were closing to Jesus, hence His ministry increasingly too place in homes, while travelling, or outdoors in the wilderness, hillsides or by the sea of Galilee. The incident recorded in Mark 3:1-6 would be His last synagogue based ministry opportunity.

Jesus offends the establishment, as He does not accept their scribal traditions and interpretations of the law. The Pharisees regarded as sinners and outcasts and therefore inferior to them those who had neither time or inclination to regulate their conduct by pharisaic standards. They ate food in a state of ceremonial uncleanness, failed to separate the tithe, didn't participate in the set fasts, and shared table fellowship with other outcasts.

Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee outsourced import and export taxes to private tax collectors by a practice of leasing the customs duty of a district at a fixed sum. The tax collector could then add to that their undisclosed amount of profit margin. Tax collectors were regarded as outcasts, disqualified to be judge or a witness in a court, were excommunicated from the synagogue, and his disgrace also extended to his family.

Q1. Was it hard for Jesus to be alone (mark2:13)?

Q2. Is Levi the same person as Matthew, the apostle who wrote Matthew's Gospel? (See Mark 2:14; 3:18, Matthew 9:9-13; 10:3 and Luke 5:27; 6:15)

Q3. Jesus selects Levi, a tax collector.

What do you think this choice mean?

Did Levi hesitate? Was he ready?

How big would that decision have been for Levi?

Do you think there are many people ready out there for gospel friendship and the gospel?

Reflect on the observation Jesus made on another occasion “the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” Discuss.

Q4. How did Jesus relate to sinners? (Mark 2:15)

Was Jesus a “friend of sinners”?

Did this mean he approved of their sin?

How important was it for them, for Jesus to befriend and eat with them?

Many Christians don't befriend non-christians. Why not? Are there dangers? Discuss

Q5. How do you reconcile this friendship with sinners with other scriptures such as Psalm1:1-6; I Corinthians 5:1-13

Q6. What did the scribes and Pharisees object to? (Mark2:16-17)

Do you think they would be effective evangelists? Why?

Did they care about sinners?

Do we care about sinners like Jesus did?

Is every person important to God?

Q7. What did Jesus mean by what he said in Mark 2:17?

Does Jesus care about the outcasts?

Who are the outcasts today?