The Mission of Jesus, part 2

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Welcome with me to Mark chapter 2.

If you are new with us today or perhaps visiting us from out of town for the holiday weekend, we are walking through the gospel of Mark and have come to the middle part of chapter 2 where Jesus calls another disciple.
We spent a week looking in verses 1 through 12 at the paralytic who was healed. And last week spent a little bit more time looking specifically at what it means for Jesus to be the Son of Man as He refers to Himself in that passage where He heals the paralytic.
Then we also took some time last Sunday to consider this question of when Jesus says to the man, your sins are forgiven, that of course is pre-cross.
How is it that Jesus can forgive sin pre-cross? And if He can, why is the cross necessary? And so we spent some time last Sunday looking at that issue and that answer is found in Romans 3.
[1:32] If you weren't able to be with us last week, you may want to take a few minutes this week and go back and listen to the message from last week. I think that will help you to understand some of the very important issues in Mark 2, 1 through 12 that may not be something that is quite as obvious to us, at least just at our first reading through it.

We come now to this section we just introduced briefly last week in verses 13 to 17. And what we're considering is the mission of Jesus. Why has He come?
What is His purpose? Why is He here? What is He accomplishing? And He's going to call this man named Levi.
And just to do just a quick review of where he ended last Sunday morning, there are some different ways that Christians tend to view their participation in the world, their friendships and relationships with unbelievers.
Some, we looked at last week, choose isolation. And they just completely remove themselves from any unbeliever. And they only talk to Christians, only work with Christians, only know Christians, only associate with Christians.
[2:55] And they just completely isolate themselves away from unbelievers. Now, there's a danger in that. And the danger in that is we have been called to be salt and light.

We have been called to reach this world with the gospel. The Bible says that the world needs those to go and preach and proclaim the truth.
And if we only talk with Christians and if we only have relationships with other believers, then we're not going to be able to share the hope of the gospel with those who don't know Jesus.
There is also another way that some tend toward, and that is toward assimilation, where people that do this are believers who try to become just like the world.
And maybe, at least to start out, maybe their motives are pure, but their practice is dangerous. Because while we are to be salt and light, we are also not to blend in, but to stand out.
[3:58] So, when 1 Peter 3 says, Always be prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have, it reminds us we're to live in such a way the world sees something different from us.

Back in the Old Testament, Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not put in the fiery furnace because they assimilated. They were put in the fiery furnace because they stood out. Because they did not go along with the social norms of the day when those social norms were an offense to God. And so, we don't want to isolate ourselves from the world.
We don't want to assimilate and become just like the world. And so, we said last week there's a third approach we must have, and that is to live a life on mission, where we are purposefully cultivating genuine relationships and genuine friendships, where we care about those who are not

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believers, and we have friendship with them, but not so we can become just like them, so we can truly serve them, and know them, and love them, and live a life on mission with the hope of praying for their salvation, and sharing the gospel with them, and helping them to understand the truth of who Jesus Christ is.
Now, I need to just remind all of us that sometimes what believers do is we understand that we're to be salt and light, and we understand we're to have relationships with unbelievers, and sometimes what Christians do is we will love unbelievers and serve them and have genuine friendships with them, but we just get so afraid to open our mouths that we just hope our lives do all the talking.
[5:56] Be careful. Of course, your life should show evidence of the gospel, but your life is what backs up the truth that you speak.

They must, Romans says, have a preacher, a speaker, a communicator. If somebody watches your life, and they see that you are kind, and gracious, and merciful, and forgiving, and loving, and patient, they may know there's something different about you, they may admire you, they may wish they could be more like you, but if you never speak the gospel, and they die, they will go to hell while admiring you, which is not what a life lived on mission is all about.
See, if we live a life of grace and gospel, but do not speak it, the danger is people may become impressed by you, and our goal is not to make people impressed with us, it's to show them the difference Jesus Christ has made in us.
Big difference. So we don't isolate from the world. We don't assimilate to be just like the world. We live on purpose, on mission, for the sake of the gospel, for the good of those who need to know Jesus, and we speak the truth of Jesus, and we live a life that shows, not that we are perfect, but the Holy Spirit is at work in our life.
That's the mission that we've been given. And I just want you to understand that this is not just my idea. This is not just something that I am giving you.
[8:02] This is coming straight from the example of Christ Himself. We're going to see it here in verses 13 to 17. This is the mission of Jesus, how He lived. Jesus does not isolate Himself from unbelievers.

Jesus does not assimilate to become just like the unbelievers. What He does do is live a life on mission so that people would see and hear the gospel.
And He doesn't just simply live a perfect life, though He does. He opens His mouth and speaks the gospel. People did not want to kill Him simply for how He lived.
They killed Him in part because of what He said. And in our world today, it takes great courage and bravery to speak the truth.
Church, of course we must live the truth. Of course our lives must match our message. Of course we don't want to say one thing and live a different way.
[9:11] But listen, the test of our day is will we have the courage to speak what is true.

So we see in verses 13 to 17 this mission with which Jesus lived that we should follow as well. And we just introduced this last week, so let me just remind you of our first couple of headings.
First, in verse 13, was the word consistency. Speaking of Jesus, He went out again by the sea and all the crowd was coming to Him and He was teaching them.
This is a consistent thing that Christ does. He's always teaching. He's where the people are. He's continually telling them who He is and reminding them of their need and helping people understand that in Christ, the Messiah is here.
The Word has become flesh. There is a great consistency in the mission of Christ. He's always teaching. He is always preaching. He is always declaring the truth.
[10:19] And we looked last week at a second heading and that was from verse 14, the word calling. Verse 14, This is the calling of Levi.

Levi is the same disciple known as Matthew. Very likely what happened is Jesus gives him a new name just like He did for Simon, calling him Peter.
And it tells us that Matthew was in the tax booth, verse 14 says. So we need to stop and consider. I need you to understand a little bit this morning of how significant this is or else we're going to miss a huge part of the mission of Jesus.
Matthew is at the tax booth, it says, because he's a tax collector. Now you need to understand that tax collectors were hated by their fellow countrymen.

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[11:30] Tax collectors were seen as traitors. They were seen as cheats. They were sellouts. Because of the way tax collectors were regarded, they were not welcomed into the synagogue.

Tax collectors were not even allowed to testify in court because they were perceived to be liars because of their occupation. Now here's how the Roman tax system worked in the first century. And this is pertinent for understanding what Jesus is doing here. Remember, Rome is ruling the world. Israel is occupied by Rome at this point in history. And so Rome is going to collect taxes. And so what Rome would do is they would bid out this work of people being tax collectors among their own people. It's called tax farming.
And so what you could do is you could bid and to the highest bidder, you could become a tax collector, have a tax farming franchise essentially. Now part of what created such disdain for the Jewish people at this point is many people, in order to be able to win that bid to be a tax collector, many of them would actually sell a part of their land to raise funds, which was extremely offensive to the Jewish people because they were selling a part of their promised land.
[13:01] And to make it worse, they would sometimes have to sell that. And if a Gentile was buying that, it was all the more offensive. And so you would have these people who would sell a part of their land, they would buy into this taxing franchise from Rome, and then they would go to work making their money.

You had essentially two kinds of tax collectors. One was known as goodbye, the other known as mocus.
There's a great helpful book here called The Life and Times of the Messiah that's very helpful in understanding how all of this broke down. And what you would have is you would have these goodbye collectors, and they were collecting what we would call a fixed tax.
These are taxes that Rome has instituted. Everybody knew what they were. They didn't like them. They didn't want to pay them, but they were set, established. Everybody knew what they were. Just to give you an example, you had what's called a poll tax where men 14 to 65 and women 12 to 65 had to pay a poll tax just for the privilege of existing.
[14:22] That was known what it was, and you would have to, the goodbye collector would collect that kind of a tax. Your income tax was a part of this.

You would tax a portion of your grain to Rome. But you had a second kind of collector known as a mocus.
This was collecting more discretionary kinds of taxes. An example would be if you were in charge of a certain area, you would pass a tax on if somebody, for example, had a cart, and they were transferring some kind of produce or grain.
You could tax them for every will of that cart that went down the road. Or if they had an animal, you could tax them for the animals that were using that road to pull whatever they were pulling.
Now, these kinds of taxes were a little bit more unknown. They weren't as set and established. And so you would have all kinds of extortion, all kinds of thievery that would happen here.
[15:34] And so the people are getting their taxes collected from the Gabai, the set established taxes, but also from the mocus who are doing these smaller taxes.

And what would happen is each year, the tax collector would have to give to Rome what he had collected that he owed Rome. Here's where the shanigans happen though.
If they could collect from the people over and above what Rome required, then the tax collector got to keep it. Which is why they got wealthy.
Which is why they were hated. Which is why it's unthinkable Jesus would call a tax collector, a cheat, a sellout, a thief to be one of his disciples.
Back to verse 14. As he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax booth.
[16:41] Now if you just stop right there, hopefully now you can understand some of the emotion that people would have felt when they saw him sitting there. Now what makes it even worse is the location where Levi is.

Levi is here in Capernaum. It's a very good place for a tax collector to be because it was a customs post on this caravan route.
You had Damascus up here to the northeast, you had the Mediterranean here to the west, and so you've got lots of traffic coming through this stop. Which means lots of people know who Levi is and nobody except other tax collectors like Levi.

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Because he's sitting at the tax booth, we do know a little bit because of that small detail, you had some men who were in charge of tax collectors, you had others who were the ones doing the actual collecting.
Those who were in charge of the people didn't sit at the tax booths. Those who were employed to do so sat at the tax booths, which means Levi is not only involved in the tax collecting franchise, he's the one actually lying, cheating, and extorting people out of their money.
[18:11] So when they see Levi at the tax booth, the only emotion associated would be anger.

This is a guy that nobody wants anything to do with other than those who do what he does. And Jesus said to him, follow me.
And anybody who knows anything at all in that day would look at Jesus and say, what kind of operation are you running?
You're trying to change the world? You're trying to preach a message? You're trying to convince people that you are sent from God? Why in the world are you calling of all people a tax collector?
This is not just somebody who was a part of an industry that people didn't like. This is someone who is known to be notorious. I don't like what we're paying for gasoline right now, but I don't despise the person who's working in the station.
[19:52] I don't like how expensive it is to fill my truck up, but I don't have anger against the people who work in the oil and gas industry. And sometimes you hear people say that tax collectors weren't liked because people didn't want to pay the tax.

That's really just a small part of it. It's so much deeper than that. It's that the tax collectors were willing to sell off their land. They were willing to steal money from their own people.
They were willing to do Rome's work and make themselves rich at the expense of their own people.
This isn't just about we don't like to pay taxes or we don't like how high the bills are.
These are people who were notorious to be frauds and cheats and liars and thieves. And to that man, Jesus says, I'll take you.
Follow me. You can be with me. This is a stunning, stunning invitation.
[21:07] And you have to wonder, if you're reading this for the very first time in your life, you would have to stop and say, well, what in the world is he going to do? I mean, surely this tax collector is not going to follow Jesus.

And you've got to stop and think, Jesus, why would you even do this? But understand how Mark puts this gospel together. He's just told us in what we studied just a couple of weeks ago at the end of chapter one that Jesus healed a leper.
Jesus touched a leper. You know what no one else would do in that society? Touch a leper. You just wouldn't do it for all the reasons we talked about three weeks ago.
Mark is just, and Mark is recording the stories from Peter is what Mark's gospel is. And Mark is just layering one after the other so you don't miss this if your eyes can see it that Jesus came to save the outcast, the lowly, the overlooked, and the despised.
Jesus said, follow me. And maybe even just as shocking as that is the last sentence in verse 14, and he rose and followed him.
[22:39] Luke 5, when it records this same encounter, adds in verse 28 that he left everything and followed him. That's true. Matthew is leaving behind his career to gain Jesus.

He's leaving behind his wealth to gain a spiritual inheritance. He's leaving behind his possessions to gain Christ.
And I don't think this is a coincidence, the wording here, and he rose and followed him. And if you were just reading chapter two without having to break every Sunday, you would immediately pick up, this sounds just like verse 11, where Jesus says the paralytic, rise and go.
to the paralyzed man, he says, I see your faith, rise and go, your sins are forgiven. This is what believers do. They rise and they follow.
This is what believers do. And so when Jesus says to Matthew, follow me, Mark says he rose and he followed him. There is a cutting off from your past life to follow Christ.
[24:05] there is a change. There's a change of direction. There's a change of leadership. And he rose and he walked.

So we've seen the consistency and we saw in verse 14 the calling. Verse 15, write down the word celebration. This is what really turns the heat up on Jesus.

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Verse 15 says, Now, admittedly the pronouns are kind of tricky to follow here, the he's and the his and the him's.
Here's what's going on. Jesus is reclining at the table in Matthew's house with Jesus and Jesus' disciples because there were many who were following Jesus.
Luke adds that this was a great feast. We don't know exactly how much time has passed between verses 14 and 15, but it had to be a very brief time.
[25:18] Matthew's going to rise and follow Jesus and then he's going to hold this party, this celebration, this big feast with other tax collectors and with Jesus.

Why does Matthew invite tax collectors? It's the only friends he had. Nobody else would have anything to do with him.
The only friends he had are these other people who are regarded as outcasts. And so he invites them to come to this big party.
And he's essentially saying to his tax collector friends and the other sinners that were there, come meet Jesus. That's what the party is. Now if you know your gospels pretty well, this sounds a lot like John 4 where Jesus is going from you've got Judea here to the south, you've got Samaria in the middle and then north Galilee.
Before Jesus comes up to Galilee, for what Mark records, Jesus is passed through Samaria, that's recorded in John 4. And in John 4 he meets a woman at the well.
[26:42] And in John 4 Jesus breaks every norm of his day. Jews didn't pass through Samaria.

They hated Samaritans. They would cross the river, go up, and then cross back over, go from Judea to Galilee and bypass Samaria.
But Jesus went through Samaria. And this lady is going in John 4 to draw water at the well because she just runs through man after man after man.
four or five husbands the town people begin to lose count. They just know this is a lady we want nothing to do with. And so the lady goes to draw water by herself.
Why would she go alone? Because she doesn't want to be gossiped about and talked to, snickered at. All the ladies go when the day is cool because it's hard work.
[27:43] She'll go when it's hot because nobody else is there. if there's somebody that could understand at least in part the life of a tax collector it's a Samaritan woman who's run through a number of husbands.

Jesus speaks to that lady which would not have been done and says to her I know you're needing water.
I am living water. You have a physical need he says but you have a greater need and your greater need is your sin.
and I can satisfy your greatest need.
What happens in John 4 is just as shocking as what's happening in Mark 2. And when the lady at the well hears who Jesus is has this long conversation with him she leaves and she goes back into town and says come meet a man.
[29:16] You've got to come meet this guy. He told me all about my life. And he offers living water. You've got to come meet this guy.

That's what Matthew's doing in Mark 2. The only friends he has are other sinners and other tax collectors. If Matthew goes and invites the respectable people in town they're not coming.
So he has this celebration he invites the tax collectors and the sinners and they show up and Jesus is there and Jesus disciples are there. It's kind of interesting because some of the disciples are fishermen in this area and part of what they would have had to pay tax for is their work as fishermen and one who has robbed them is Levi.
You can only imagine the internal conversations of the disciples in those early days. As you look at this celebration of what takes place I want you to see fourthly a complaint.
It's in verse 16. The complaint comes from the scribes of the Pharisees. By the way verse 15 says they were reclining with Jesus at the table.
[30:46] You can't picture your dining room table that you're going to go and eat here in just a few minutes. That's not how the tables were in the first century. This would have been a U shaped table.

It would have been at most about a foot off the ground and they would have reclined on their left side with a pillow there and they would have used their right hand to eat.

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That's what the scene would have looked like. And verse 16 says the scribes of the Pharisees when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors said to the disciples why does he eat with tax collectors sinners?
This is a very important question. This is a question that you need to be able to answer. Why does he eat with them?
The scribes are furious at this. Just a quick word of review for you in case you weren't with us. The scribes group that arose during the time of Ezra.
[31:58] They taught the law. They interpreted the law. It says to the scribes are the Pharisees. Pharisees are a group that began 200 years or so before Jesus came to the earth.

They consider themselves saved because they were separated from the world. They thought they were safe because they were separated from the world. The Pharisees were against the Greek culture infiltrating their culture.
Their whole life was about being separated. And here's Jesus who eats with sinners.
sinners. What Jesus is doing goes against the very heart of what they thought made them on good terms with God.
We don't eat with sinners. We don't talk to tax collectors.
[33:15] We are separate. Not in the sense of living a life that's distinct. In the sense of our works make us safe.

Makes us good in God's eyes. And they hear that Jesus is now eating with sinners and tax collectors.
And in our culture today to share a meal with somebody involves some level of relationship. In the first century it's much deeper than that.
To share a meal with somebody is considered to be a very friendly intimate kind of thing. It's not just that Jesus talked to Matthew but now he's actually sharing a meal with Matthew.
This is completely off the charts for them. The scribes and the Pharisees here are outraged at this.
[34:24] Luke adds that they were grumbling. They're doing the same thing the Israelites did in the Old Testament. They're grumbling about what God is doing.

Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners? Now notice in verse 16 it says that they said to the disciples why does he eat?
How are they doing that? They're not inside the house. One they weren't invited. Two they would have never ever gotten to the house. That would have absolutely not happened. So they've gotten wind that this big party is going on and they go to check it out and they see who's there and they are appalled that Jesus is there and Jesus has his disciples there eating with Levi and Levi's buddies.
Now the scribes can't go into the house. How are they talking to the disciples? Well they have to be waiting outside and waiting for the disciples to exit.
And as the disciples exit they pull them aside and say hey I've got a question for you. Why in the world is Jesus in this party and why are you with him?
[35:54] See they're not only going on record with their hatred of Jesus they're trying to create doubt in the minds of the disciples you don't want to follow this guy. Don't you see what he's doing?

Don't you see how he's leading you astray? You don't want to be on the team of Jesus. Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?
That's their complaint. And that leads us to finally a fifth term and that's the word correction. It's the correction that Jesus gives to them.
And when Jesus heard it, so word gets to Jesus, either Jesus goes outside and hears the complaint or maybe a disciple comes back inside and says Jesus here's the word outside what's going on.
Jesus hears what's being said and he said to them those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick.
[37:07] A literal rendering here would be it's not the strong ones that need a physician. It's those who are badly or those who are bad off.

It's not those who are healthy that need the doctor. It's those who are sick that need the doctor.
Remember the Pharisees essentially are trying just to isolate themselves from the rest of the world. You've got others who try to become just like the world and here is Jesus showing us how to live on mission. How to not isolate yourself from the world but how to not become just like the world the way that you do that is you go where sinners are and you have relationships with those who need salvation but when you talk to them you don't try to sound just like them and blend in you tell them

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what they need to hear and Jesus says you want to know why I'm with the sinners because they need a savior why am I eating with the outcast because you won't tell them the truth somebody's got to tell them the truth you've removed yourself from them as if to think your good works are going to save you what about the outcast who are sinners in desperate need of salvation to know who God is! prophesy and say to them even the shepherds thus says the Lord God shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves should not shepherds feed the sheep you eat the fat you clothe yourselves with the wool you slaughter the fat ones but you do not feed the sheep the weak you have not strengthened the sick you have not healed the injured you have not bound up and the stray you have not brought back the lost you have not sought and with force and harshness you have ruled them this was the indictment of
God in the Old Testament against the spiritual leaders who were supposed to be leading people to the truth of God and instead just sought to abuse neglect and forsake those in their care scribes and the Pharisees say how dare you talk to a tax collector they cheat us and God is saying you who are supposed to be religious leaders cheat them because you are supposed to minister to them and instead you have forsaken them and with that as the backdrop Jesus says it's not the healthy who need a physician it's those who are sick that's why Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners because they're sick if you're healthy don't go to the doctor tomorrow you don't need to right you go to the doctor when you're sick but what about that doctor
[41:14] I mean you know you think about it most doctors just hang around with sick people why is it because they're trying to become just like them and they're trying to catch what they have is the doctor the family practice doctor going to the office tomorrow and saying I want to become just like the world and so I'm hoping I can catch the flu from somebody who might come see me of course not he's not trying to become just like them well then why doesn't he stay home after all isn't it healthier and safer to stay home then go be around all the sick people the answer is of course but that's not why he spent eight or nine or ten years of training that doctor she goes to the office tomorrow because she is there trained to help sick people that doctor who has spent so much of his life training and studying and researching so he can help those who are sick if he stays home he doesn't help the sick one he's not trying to become sick like them it's not assimilation but it's not isolation if it's isolation there's no doctor going to the office tomorrow it's understanding of a purpose and so the healthy doctor interacts with the sick patient for the purpose of leading them to health

Jesus says it's not the healthy or the well who have need of a physician it's those who are sick now you need to make sure you catch this today Jesus was not being inclusive or tolerant or dismissive of sin what he was doing was living his life on mission he was purposefully spending time with those who are spiritually sick so he could call them to repentance how do we know because that's exactly what the text has already told his message was repent and believe if Jesus is just trying to earn favor with the world he's not calling arrogant proud religious people to repentance which is why it's such folly when people today claim to be believers and want to look just like the world and talk just like the world and act just like the world and then make their defense well we're just trying to reach the world you don't reach the world by talking like the world you reach the world by loving them serving them and speaking to them they are sinners in need of salvation or else they face judgment and if your desire is to be loved by the world you will not give that message
Jesus shows us what it's like to live on mission and then he says at the very end I came not to call the righteous but to call sinners and I think we have to understand the way Jesus uses this here when he says righteous the Bible tells us in Romans 3 there are none who are righteous no not one apart from Christ apart from the work of the!
and salvation there are none who are righteous so when Jesus says I didn't come to call the righteous you gotta say stop wait a minute who are the righteous the answer is there are none but there are those who think their works make them righteous scribes and Pharisees in other words he says if you think you can earn your way to God I have nothing for you if you want to rest in a salvation of your work of your doing of your accomplishment I've got nothing to offer you because Jesus did not come to add himself to your works he didn't come to clinch the deal he's not your trump card he's not your backup plan he's not that last little bit that you work you work you work you work he just puts you over the top that's not who
Jesus is Jesus said what I'm calling you to do is die to self take up your cross abandon it all and follow me now if you are an outcast and everybody hates you and nobody respects you and no one wants anything to do with you and you're willing to abandon it all and follow me you shall be saved

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that's the work of the gospel but if you're one of these who think you are righteous who think that your good works will get you into heaven Jesus has nothing for you because he's not interested I hate to mess up your bumper sticker he's not interested in being your co-pilot that's not gospel [47:28] Jesus isn't sharing command of my life with me he bought me with the price of his blood he is Lord not my co-Lord and if I think I'm righteous and I just need Jesus to kind of co-pilot me through the gates he's got nothing for me but if I come to the place in my life where I say you know what I'm no better than an outcast I'm no better than a tax collector I'm no better spiritually than a physical leper is physically I have nothing of my own to bring Jesus you're going to have to be everything to me Jesus says that's why I'm here I've come to seek and to save that which was lost you know the problem with the

Pharisees they didn't think they were lost therefore they did not want to rescue if you're here this morning and you know you're spiritually lost I've got great news for you Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost what's Jesus message to the world you don't have to guess he's already told you Mark 1 verse 15 repent and believe in the gospel do you know why the Pharisees didn't care for that message they didn't want to repent why would they care what Jesus says if what Jesus says means they have to admit they are a sinner but if you're
Matthew you and you know you're the outcast and somebody comes to you and says if you believe in me I'll change your life you got to turn from your sin and you know you're a sinner then those words are beautiful wonderful words of life by the way you know what Levi that name means the word means attached which is quite interesting because if there's one thing Levi is not it's attached in fact he never lived up to his name his life is the exact opposite Levi is detached Levi is detached from his own countryman because he's detached from joy he's detached from companionship the only friends he has are other cheats how do you ever trust to have people around you in your life if you're a cheater and your friends are cheaters don't you know that if you turn your back it's coming right back at you
Levi name means attached and he's the least attached person there is Jesus is going to change his name to Matthew which is a name that means gift of God a tax collector detached from everyone in grace made a gift of God that's what the gospel does God saves Levi's in your life the people that nobody likes the people that you think would never be saved you have anybody in your life that you think is so far gone they could never ever repent if you do be encouraged by this text God saves Levi's that family member of yours who mocks you who belittles Christianity who hates the scripture dear friend keep praying for their salvation do not give up God saves sinners that person that you go to school with and you're so glad that summer's here you don't have to see them for three months when August comes and they're in your second hour they may be there very much on divine appointment because God may use you to say to that outcast Jesus saves and he does and it may be for you today that you're Levi you're the outcast you're the one that's tried everything in this world of your own power to find happiness and you've never found it would you today come to the end of yourself would you today just confess and recognize that there's nothing of your own doing that can ever take that longing in your heart away and would you repent of your sin and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ
[53:36] Jesus said to Levi follow me and he rose and he followed him his life's still a mess he's got a lot of unanswered questions what's he going to do for a job how's he going to answer to Rome what are all his friends going to think he didn't know the answer to any of those questions he just knew that the reason Jesus ate with tax collectors was not to become more like them was to call them out of the world to him and this morning if you don't know Christ as your savior the good news for you is through the gospel gospel of Jesus Christ he still saves sinners some of you like me that have been around for a long time may remember an old hymn from our childhood

I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he has made known nor why unworthy Christ in love redeemed me for his own but I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day last verse says I know not how the spirit moves convincing men of sin revealing Jesus through his word creating faith in him I don't know how Jesus saved Matthew I don't know how Jesus saves anybody but I know whom I've believed and I am convinced that he is able why in the world would the gospel be preached and one man repent and one man reject
I don't know why are the wonderful words of the gospel to some words of eternal life and to others something they hate I don't know but I do know this that for those who have eyes to see ears to

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hear hearts to believe and a will to obey we pass from spiritual death unto spiritual life because we have a Savior who came to seek and to save the lost and as a child I heard the gospel message and my heart believed through the work of the spirit in the truth of his word my heart believed and if I take my last breath five seconds from now I'll tell you where I'm going
I'm going to be with him and it's not because of anything I have done it's because Jesus in grace saved my soul that's the mission of Jesus that's the message of the church and this is the hope of the world Lord we thank you for the truth of the gospel today and pray that it's made clear and pray that even now your Holy Spirit would be working in hearts and bringing understanding to those who desperately need to believe draw them to a place of repentance we pray draw them to a place of belief and trust give them the assurance of your mercy mercy and we pray that even this moment you would bring salvation to those who would call out to you in faith it's in
Christ's name we pray amen forab and and you in instance Thank you.

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