

07-20-2025

How Can Jesus Do That?

Mark 2:13-17 (Matthew 9:9-13 / Luke 5:27-32)

I think in our world today and throughout history, every society has had to deal with some type of prejudice or racism. People are different and unfortunately those differences tend to separate us from each other. Some people are more prejudice than others as some societies are more prejudice at times than others. Wars have been fought and are still fought because of prejudice and racism. One of the goals of Christianity is to end all prejudice and racism. This can only happen if everyone comes to a saving faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we are to see each other as **children of God through faith in Jesus** (Galatians 3:26). We would all be one big happy family, right? There would be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. We would all be one family in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). It will be this way in heaven. There will be people from every nation, every tribe, every people group, and every tongue together when we worship God in heaven (Revelation 7:9-10). God made us different so that we can complement each other. Prejudice and racism were very obvious in Jesus' day. I know we read in scripture that "*the whole city was gathered together at the door*" when they heard that Jesus could heal (Mark 1:33). The word "whole" here probably refers to the Jews of a certain class. I do not think that the Roman soldiers who were living in the city came to Peter's house to see Jesus. I do not think the tax collectors, who were Jewish came to the house. If there were any prostitutes or sinners in town, they would not be accepted by the people. Jesus started to end the prejudice of His day by calling Matthew, also known as Levi, to follow Him. Here is the account.

Mark 1:13 "*Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them.*" It is important for us to know that Jesus **again** walked along the seashore of the Sea of Galilee. Do you enjoy walking along the seashore? While in Florida, it was refreshing to stroll along the beach. We were planning to be there only 10 minutes. My family convinced me to take off my boots and socks and walk in the sand and surf. I did. We were there for over an hour. By the time we left, the tops of my feet were sunburned. But it was enjoyable, the sound of the surf, the coolness of the wind, the freedom of thought, the opportunity to unwind. Jesus enjoyed His time along the shores of Galilee. Along this shore in Capernaum was also the main road people traveled from Damascus to Egypt. This was also the port where boats would depart and arrive, unloading their cargo, whether it was fish or merchandise from around the lake. Because this was such an active area, there was also a tax office on the road. Matthew, also known as Levi was one of many tax collectors at this office. People were taxed for being a man, for being a woman, for

walking on the road, for transporting things, for buying and selling, for any number of things the Romans could come up with to take your money. Since there was so much money being collected for the Romans, guess who else was there by the tax office. Yes, Roman soldiers. They were there to protect Rome's interests, to keep the money from being stolen and to make sure people paid their taxes. When Matthew said you owed a certain amount, you paid what he said or the Roman soldiers would intervene. Many times when Jesus was there, people gathered around Him. And He taught them. One of the reoccurring themes Jesus taught was repentance and the coming kingdom of God. Who listened to Jesus? Those who came to hear Him teach listened. But also, some tax collectors and maybe even some Roman soldiers.

Verse 14 *“As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him.”* **Why was Matthew also named Levi?** Probably because he was from the tribe of Levi. Look at the Gospel of Matthew. He knew his Hebrew scriptures and he knew Jewish tradition. I have read that Matthew quoted more Hebrew scriptures and wrote more about Jewish tradition than any other New Testament writer. He could have been a priest. Instead, he chose riches. Matthew became a rich man and he got his wealth by collecting taxes. He was loved by the other tax collectors, but hated by all the other Jews. **Why would Matthew choose to follow Jesus?** I do not think a rich man who enjoys his riches would pay attention to a man who meets him for the first time and commands him to, *“Follow Me,”* even if it was Jesus. I think that Matthew listened to the teaching of Jesus a lot. He started thinking about his life. I think Matthew became very dissatisfied with his wealth and his lifestyle. Every time Jesus preached about repentance, Matthew got more convicted of his sin. He had stolen from his countrymen everyday by charging higher taxes. After hearing Jesus, he realized his sin. I get this from how this encounter ends. Jesus came to call sinners to repentance because **good people do not think they need to repent**. Matthew learned from Jesus he was a sinner who needed to repent. When Jesus told Matthew to *“Follow Me,”* Matthew is repenting of his sins, turning away from his riches and the crime of cheating others when he decides to follow Jesus and learn His ways.

Verse 15 *“Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.”* Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to share a farewell meal with him at his house. More than likely, Matthew invited his tax collector friends to join him and meet this Man, Jesus who has the words of eternal life (John 6:68-69). This is the first time the word “disciple” is used in the Gospel of Mark. **A disciple is a learner.** The word means **“one who learns.”** The word does not include the idea of salvation. The word itself does not mean that the person called

a disciple is a saved person. Judas Iscariot was a disciple (Mark 14:10). Jesus said that Judas was not clean and would betray Him (John 13:11). Then Satan entered Judas Iscariot (13:27). Judas was not saved. After one of Jesus' teachings in Capernaum (John 6:59) "*many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more*" (6:66). These disciples were never saved and never followed Jesus again as far as we know. It is interesting that Jesus told His disciples to "*make disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:19). We are not told to make believers. We are to make disciples "*teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*" (28:20). **As a disciple, we are to learn, believe and follow all of the teachings of Jesus.** This is not an option for the disciples of Jesus. Everyone who claims to "believe in Jesus" needs to be a disciple of Jesus. We need to get rid of the wrong things we believe and **observe everything** that Jesus has taught. We need to learn to witness and make disciples. We need to learn to use our God given gifts effectively for the glory of God. We need to learn to suffer for Jesus (Philippians 3:10). Many of these tax collectors came to this meal to learn from Jesus, about being His disciples. Jesus did not tell them all to stop being tax collectors. I am sure He taught what John the Baptist taught, "*Collect no more than what is appointed for you*" (Luke 3:12-13). Be honest, be kind, be helpful, be respectful. "*And they followed Him.*"

Verse 16 "*And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, 'How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?'*" These scribes and Pharisees wanted to stir up trouble among the disciples of Jesus. If they had a problem with Jesus, they should have spoken directly with Jesus. Instead, they went to His disciples. They wanted to put doubt in their minds, that Jesus was doing something wrong. The Pharisees did not want the disciples to trust Jesus. Jesus eats with sinners. What kind of example is He setting? These scribes and Pharisees thought they were superior to Jesus because they hated sinners and would not defile themselves by being in their presence. This same thing happens today. To often, when we have a question about a person's actions or statements, we do not talk to that person first. We go to other people and cause those people to be suspicious and doubt the one we have problems with. Fortunately, before the disciples have time to react, Jesus hears and quickly responds to the accusers.

Verse 17 "*When Jesus heard it, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'*" Jesus stood up for what He was doing because He was doing the right thing. Jesus came into the world to save sinful people (1 Timothy 1:15). Who in the world is sinful? Every person is sinful. "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). The problem is the world, and at times

the Church makes light of sin or overlooks sin or allows people to live in their sin so that people are not aware that they are sinful. Who can Jesus save? Who can Jesus help? Jesus can only help those who know they are sick, who know they are sinners and need help. Matthew, along with many of his tax collector friends knew they were sinful and they knew they needed help. They turned to the only One who could save them from their sins. He is Jesus.

The scribes and Pharisees did not know that they were sick, that they were sinful. They did not see their own need. And what was worse, they did not recognize their own responsibility to help those who were sick, who were sinners. **These Pharisees were more concerned about their own holiness and cleanness** instead of reaching out and helping sinners have a right relationship with God. They could not do this because they did not have a right relationship with God themselves. They were sinners and did not know it and would not listen to anyone saying they were. **These Pharisees were critical of Jesus.** They criticized His great concern for sinners. They complained about His involvement in their lives. They did not see their complaining as sin. They should have been encouraging sinners to repent, but they could not because they did not repent themselves because they did not understand their own sins. **These Pharisees were pointing out people's sins and condemning people of their sins.** They gave the sinner no hope of redemption, not knowing that their condemnation of the sinner was a condemnation of themselves because they showed no mercy. Jesus showed mercy and offered the hope of redemption to all who would repent of their sins and follow Him. *"What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God"* (Micah 6:8).

Why was Paul successful in his ministry? One reason is because he always remembered that he was the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). And for him, he was (Acts 26:9-11). Because Paul was a sinner, he received God's mercy (1 Timothy 1:16). He wanted others to experience God's mercy through the forgiveness of their sins. No matter how much we progress and mature in the Christian faith, always remember we are sinners saved by God's great grace. Be a disciple of Jesus. Be a learner. Learn, believe and put into practice everything Jesus teaches us.

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Our mission statement: **Spread the gospel of Jesus Christ;
Teach believers to worship God; Foster growth in the Christian faith**

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How Can Jesus Do That?

Mark 2:13-17 (Matthew 9:9-13 / Luke 5:27-32)

Questions to ask yourself: Intro:

Is there prejudice and racism in our world today? Why?
Is being prejudice or racial natural, just part of who we are or is it a learned behavior?
What is one goal of Christianity? Are you contributing to that goal?

Verse 13:

What was a reoccurring theme Jesus taught and preached?
Who was listening to Jesus as He preached on the shore?

Verse 14:

What Jewish tribe was Matthew from?
Why would Matthew choose to follow Jesus?
How and why do people become convicted of their sins?
Do good people sin? Do they need to repent?

Verse 15:

What is a disciple? What does disciple mean?
Are you a disciple of Jesus? How do you know you are?
Are all disciples also saved?
Why did the disciples in John 6:66 stop following Jesus? Read 6:60, 53-59, 61-64
What does a disciple of Jesus do? Matthew 28:20 Are you?

Verse 16:

Did the scribes and Pharisees confront Jesus with their problem?
Who did they complain to? Why?

Verse 17:

Do you see yourself as a righteous person or a sinner?
How did Paul see himself? 1 Timothy 1:15-16

Actions to take:

Love Jesus more by realizing how utterly sinful you are. Luke 7:36-50
Receive complete forgiveness and find great joy in the Lord.
Work at getting rid of all your wrong, worldly beliefs. Believe God and His word.
A disciple makes disciples. Learn. Believe. Share. Make disciples.

Next week: Mark 2:18-22

How Can Your Disciples Do That?