

GO DEEPER

use these questions for further study

In your own words, summarize the main idea from last week's passage (1:21-45)

Read Mark 2:1-17. Share 2-3 observations of what you see in the passage and then answer the following questions:

What strikes you about the faith/faithfulness of the paralytic's friends?

What obstacles (internal and external) do they have to overcome?

Which is easier to say, "you're forgiven" or "get up and walk"? Why?

What is blasphemy? Are the scribes right to take the sin of blasphemy seriously? Why do the scribes conclude that Jesus is blaspheming? Is this necessarily an unreasonable conclusion? How do you think you would respond if you saw a human (even a powerful one) claim to be God? Should the scribes be judged for their initial questioning of Jesus, or for how they respond after he heals the man? How might this apply to our lives and our relationship with Jesus?

What is significant (and surprising) about Jesus calling Levi as a disciple?

How do you think the other four disciples might have reacted?

How might this call be an act of healing and restoration for Levi?

Why do the pharisaical scribes question Jesus' behavior?

How would you respond if you saw your pastor or a major evangelical religious leader at a party full of notoriously immoral people? Why?

What does Jesus' response in vs 17 mean?

How do Jesus' actions and words continue to challenge us to this day?

The Pharisees believed that creating a "safe" environment and remaining separate from the world was the best strategy for faithfulness to God and the scriptures. Jesus challenged this by modeling a missional approach of going out into the world. Why is it sometimes tempting to take the approach of the Pharisees? If we are to follow Jesus, can we afford to hide in holy huddles or do we need to go out into the world where we risk being "polluted"? Why?

Who are the "tax collectors" and "sinners" of our day? Who are the kinds of people you wouldn't want to be associated with?

What would it look like for you to reach out to those people in love?

What are the risks involved? What would you have to sacrifice?

What is one practical step you can take to extend the love of Jesus to someone on the margins or whom you don't naturally have affinity for?

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