

STUDY SHEET FOR Mark 2:13-17 @ CAPC OAKLAND

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The Gospel of Mark: *Author, Date, and Recipients*

The apostle Peter passed on reports of the words and deeds of Jesus to his attendant, John Mark, who wrote this Gospel for the wider church as the record of Peter's apostolic testimony. The book was likely written from Rome during the mid- to late-50s A.D. Mark's audience, largely unfamiliar with Jewish customs, needed to become familiar with such customs in order to understand the coming of Jesus as the culmination of God's work with Israel and the entire world, so Mark explains them.

the sea: θάλασσα pronounced thalassa in Greek meaning the sea (or ocean); in contrast to the land, a particular sea or lake, it's often used in the gospels as shorthand for the sea of Galilee (also called Tiberias).

CROWD: ὄχλος or ochlos meaning a crowd, mob, multitude, the common people (as opposed to the elites or ruling class). Mark uses the word ochlos 38 times (a lot!) to represent the mass of people looking to and gathering around Jesus – *maybe we, as the readers of the text, are also part of this crowd.*

Follow me:: ἀκολουθέω pronounced akoloutheó meaning to follow one who precedes, walk in their footsteps/or way; to someone as their attendant, fellow travelers, or disciple/student. It points back to the first use of the word in the call of the fishermen in Mark 1:17 and to the central section of the gospel in which Jesus says to the crowd: "If any wish to **come after me**, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and **follow me**. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." Mark 8:34-35

he sat at dinner in Levi's house:: Tables are one of the most important places of human connection. We shouldn't be surprised, then, to find that throughout the Bible God has a way of showing up at tables. In fact, it's worth noting that at the center of the spiritual lives of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we find a table: the table of Passover and the table of Communion.

Eating was for Jesus a key means by which he proclaimed the coming of God's reign and acted, or enacted, its arrival. Such meals were places of connection, brokenness and blessing. Jesus' table fellowship with prostitutes, tax collectors, and sinners had tremendous meaning – he was elevating them to his status circle and expressing his solidarity with them.

As N. T. Wright writes, "When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal."

tax collectors:: The tax collectors were Jews who were appointed by the Roman authorities. They collected taxes for Rome and it's thought that they often charged their own people outrageous fees for themselves. This was how the Roman Empire turned people against their own people, making them collaborators. They were hated by the people and regarded as sinners. As Levi's tax collector's tent was by the lake he probably taxed the fishing industry.

Mark 2:13-17

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹³ Jesus went out again beside *the sea*; the whole **CROWD** gathered around him, and he taught them. ¹⁴ As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the *tax-collection* station, and he said to him, "**Follow me.**" And he got up and **followed him.**

¹⁵ And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many *tax collectors* and *sinners* were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ When the **SCRIBES** and the *Pharisees* saw that he was eating with *sinners* and *tax collectors*, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with *tax collectors* and *sinners*?" ¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous but *sinners.*"

Isaiah 2:1-5
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹ The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come

the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war any more.

⁵ O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the Lord!

Isaiah 25:6-10
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will
make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged
wines,

of rich food filled with marrow, of well-
aged wines strained clear.

⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the covering that is spread over all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears
from all faces,

and the disgrace of his people he will take
away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,

"See, this is our God; we have waited for
him, so that he might save us.

This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

¹⁰ For the hand of the Lord will rest on this
mountain.

Revelation 21:1-7
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹ Then I [John] saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them and be their God;

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in the text?
- Why are the scribes and pharisees so upset about Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors?
- Can you think of other gospel stories that happen around meals or a dinner table? How do they reflect the promise and beauty of the table visions in Isaiah 2, 25 and Revelation 21?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be, or change, through this word of scripture?