

The Gospel of Mark

Banqueting with Sinners: Lesson 5

- I. Jesus is Teaching (Rabbi)
 - a. By the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum
 - b. Emphasizes the primary activity of His ministry
 - i. Scribes and Pharisees taught from the old interpretations of previous rabbis
 - ii. Jesus brought a new message
 1. Taught with authority
 2. People were amazed
- II. The Calling of Levi
 - a. "Follow me"
 - i. Levi immediately drops everything and follows
 - ii. "Follow" implies
 1. Bearing a load
 2. Risk and cost
 3. Response to faith
 - a. An action not a thought or belief
 - b. Levi, Son of Alphaeus, was probably Matthew
 - i. Many people had multiple names
 - ii. Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew
 - iii. Levi was a tax collector
 1. Tax collectors were hated
- III. Tax Collectors
 - a. Typically were ethnic Jews in service to Rome
 - b. Rome set an amount to be collected
 - c. Tax collectors bid to collect taxes in an area
 - d. Made rounds to collect taxes or sat in booths
 - e. Roman tax system was complicated
 - i. Standing taxes set by Rome
 1. Income tax
 2. Poll tax
 3. Ground tax
 - ii. Standing taxes were well known by all people
 - iii. Other fees and taxes
 1. Road and bridge tax
 2. Tax on transported goods
 3. Tax on industries - fishing
 - iv. Tax collectors could collect any amount they could
 - v. System based on bribes, greed and graft
 - vi. Condoned by the Roman authorities

- f. Despised and hated by everyone
 - i. Put in the same category as thieves and murders
 - ii. Disqualified s judges and witnesses in court
 - iii. Expelled from the synagogue
 - iv. Presence render a house unclean
 - v. Could not give alms or exchange money
 - vi. Jews could lie to them

g. Reminder of Roman domination – traitors

IV. The Calling of Levi

- a. Jesus called a tax collector into the chosen band of his disciples
 - i. Causes great surprise and consternation
 - ii. Jesus contacts unclean people
 - 1. Morally unclean by choice
 - iii. Levi may have already been known by other disciples of Jesus
 - iv. Discipleship was shown to be based only on a relationship with Jesus

V. At Levi's House

- a. Levi opens a door for Jesus making it possible to meet a flood of people just like Levi
- b. Jesus makes it clear that choosing a person like Levi was not an exception
- c. Jesus was reclining at dinner
 - i. Fully engaged
 - ii. Accepted them as they were
 - iii. Disregarding the normal social boundaries
- d. To the Pharisees studying the Torah made people righteous
- e. Sinners is a word used in Torah and by tradition as people who were wicked
 - i. Not occasional transgressors
 - ii. People who stand outside of the Torah
 - iii. Includes real criminals and people too busy, too poor or too ignorant to study Torah
- f. Sinners could also mean
 - i. Anyone at the highest level of moral achievement
 - ii. Includes people who were morally careless, morally disinterested, or simply too busy to attend to moral and spiritual matters
 - iii. Includes people we might call truly wicked, obviously evil, fully committed to a pathway of destruction
- g. Jesus purposely provokes the Pharisees
 - i. Sinners are inside in fellowship - follow
 - ii. Scribes are outside in judgement – will not follow
 - iii. This fellowship is much different than the Torah
 - 1. Torah – studying brings righteousness
 - 2. Jesus – imputes righteousness violating social and religious tradition

- h. Jesus is with them before they repented!
 - i. Jesus loves people as they
 - ii. Jesus does not refuse association until after repentance
 - iii. Jesus embraces them before they repent
 - 1. Embrace does not mean approval of behavior
 - 2. But does reach out in tenderness, longing for their (re)turn to God
 - iv. Repentance comes as a result of Jesus' love for us and our love for Him

VI. Who are the Pharisees?

- a. Separated ones or holy ones
- b. Established 200 years before Jesus
- c. Lay movement with great influence
 - i. Sovereignty of God
 - ii. Resurrection
 - iii. Angels and demons
 - iv. Exact obedience to Torah and traditions
- d. Had disdain for all others
- e. Initial fervor and vitality congealed into a rigid set of rules and traditions
- f. Attempts to honor the Torah created a web of confinement and crushing burdens

VII. At Levi's House

- a. Jesus responds to the Pharisees
 - i. Jesus comes to heal the sick not tend to the well
 - ii. Jesus rejects the "righteous" Pharisees
 - iii. Jesus associates with sinners
 - iv. Jesus seeks the lost
 - 1. He is the doctor who makes unannounced house calls

VIII. Tradition of Fasting

- a. Fasting Is a highly valued tradition throughout the Bible
 - i. Daniel fasted (Dan. 1:8-21)
 - ii. Ezra fasted (Neh. 9:1-6)
 - iii. Jesus fasted (Matt. 4:2)
 - iv. The early church fasted (Acts 13:1-4)
- b. Pillars of Judaism
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Almsgiving
 - iii. Fasting

IX. The Wedding Feast

- a. Wedding feasts lasted for days
- b. Guest were only responsible to enjoy themselves
- c. Rabbis were expected to suspend teaching
- d. No thought or place for fasting
- e. Eventually the guests would leave

- X. Feasting with Jesus
 - a. Jesus has no objection to fasting
 - b. Jesus' immediate presence required only joy and feasting
 - c. Jesus suggests the groom will be forcibly removed
 - i. Jesus knows the future consequences of His actions
 - d. Fasting can be resumed by the disciples after His departure
 - e. Jesus ministry
 - i. time of feasting, not fasting
 - ii. time of celebration, not mourning
- XI. Two short parables
 - a. New patch on an old garment will shrink when washed
 - i. Tears the garment and tears the patch
 - ii. Ruins the old and the new
 - b. New wine will ferment in old wine skins
 - i. Wine skins bursts and the wine leaks out
 - ii. Ruins the old and the new
 - c. In both cases the new destroys the old
 - d. Jesus is the New
 - i. He is NOT an addition to the old
 - ii. He cannot be integrated into Judaism, the Torah or the synagogue
 - e. Jesus participates in human structures
 - i. Synagogue (old) – His teaching (new)
 - f. Jesus may honor the Torah
 - i. Breaks with the law when it obstructs His teaching
 - ii. Subordinates the Torah to Himself
 - g. Jesus relinquishes Himself
 - i. Keeps divine authority
 - h. Jesus gives Himself in service
 - i. Always shows allegiance to the Father
 - i. Jesus gives His life for the world
 - i. Not a captive of the world

Will we forsake business as usual and join the wedding feast?

Will we become new and expand with the Gospel message?