



### ***Why Does He Eat With Sinners?***

Mark 2:13-3:6

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**Overview:** Although the coming of Jesus was in perfect fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the ministry of Jesus took shape in a way that was entirely unexpected. Instead of distancing Himself from the religiously disqualified or unqualified, Jesus intentionally reached out to those whom the religious establishment had forgotten. Jesus then formed a group of disciples that were not hindered by false expectations or man-made traditions; rather, they were set free by true biblical interpretation. Consequently, they found joy instead of melancholy; freedom instead of legality; and healing instead of misery. Mark's description of discipleship in the earliest days of Jesus's ministry provides wonderful insights into the words, "Follow Me."

**01. Following Jesus does not require us to live in isolation from the world; rather, it enables us to engage everyone made in the image of God.**

**02. Following Jesus does not require us to live as prisoners of this world; rather, it enables us to experience joy in the presence of God.**

**03. Following Jesus does not require us to live for approval from this world; rather, it enables us to have confidence in our standing before God.**

Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1. What reputation accompanied those who collected taxes for the Roman government? How could Jesus's call for Levi (Matthew) to become a disciple have resulted in "bad publicity" for Jesus's early ministry? What does Jesus's call to Levi suggest about His concern or lack thereof about being identified with sinners?
2. What does the text suggest about the level of interest in Jesus's ministry from others who were considered unworthy to follow Him? How can the church reach out to such people today without abandoning or violating biblical teaching about sin? Are you a positive Christian influence among your non-Christian friends?
3. Jesus's ministry was unpredictable in the sense that He rejected human tradition in favor of true biblical interpretation. What areas of Christian living do you find are more rooted in tradition than Scripture? What is the proper balance between keeping an open mind to new ideas and closing off options that would lead us astray from God's Word?
4. Notice how frequently questions are asked about Jesus and His ministry (2:16, 18, 24, and by implication, 3:2). When was the last time anyone asked you about what Christians believe or why Christians behave in a certain way? How did you answer them?
5. When Jesus declares Himself to be "Lord of the Sabbath," He is making a statement about His authority to interpret Scripture correctly. How is this truth displayed in 3:1-6? What leads to Jesus's visceral reaction in 3:5, and how does our knowledge of Jesus's emotions compel us to view Him as the final authoritative interpreter of all Scripture?

**For Further Reading: Andrew Randall, *Following Jesus: The Essentials of Christian Discipleship* (Banner of Truth, 2018)**

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