

## LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

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[Fall Season: September 27 – December 6 | Winter Season: January 11 – March 14]

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### LEADER DETAILS

- **MAIN TEXT:** Mark 2:13-3:6
- **MAIN IDEA:** Jesus does not come merely to patch up our old lives. He comes as the Good Physician and Lord who moves toward sinners, makes us new, and calls us to trust Him enough to follow.
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** Focus on helping everyone participate. Draw quieter people into the conversation without putting them on the spot, and resist the urge to fill the silence.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS (Full details at: [emergence.church/digital-bulletin](https://emergence.church/digital-bulletin))

- **Applied Podcast - Subscribe Now!**
  - Applied is a weekly episodic podcast from Emergence Church where Pastors Ryan Baitzel and Doug Becker (with others dropping in as well) provide additional context, insight, and application from the Scriptures behind each week's sermon. Available wherever you get your podcasts!
- **Family Dedication - October 22 & 25 - Both Campuses**
  - **The Why** - By publicly declaring their intent to raise their kids to love Jesus, parents will be encouraged to keep that commitment in the highs and lows of parenting. A great opportunity for those families to invite family/friends to hear the Gospel. Sign up on the Digital Bulletin!

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### GETTING STARTED:

- **Ice-breaker:** What's something you've tried to fix yourself before finally realizing you needed help?
- **Pray:** This helps everyone prepare their heads and hearts as you turn to the discussion.
- **Watch Community Extras Video** (length 4:16 – questions from video are included below)

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### LAST WEEK'S GROWTH STEP FOLLOW-UP:

*[Leaders: These follow-ups are meant to offer some accountability while being low-pressure. Keep it casual, "If you were able to try this last week, how did it go?" Sharing is optional; it's always okay to pass.]*

- **Outward Action:** Identify one person God has placed in your life who may be far from Him, and take one intentional step toward them this week: pray for them, invite them, offer to pray with them, ask a spiritual question, or share something about your faith.
- **Inward Prayer:** Ask God, "Where have I allowed a secondary problem or desire to become more important to me than knowing you and walking with you?"

## **SERMON DISCUSSION**

*Prioritize meaningful conversation over getting through every question.*

### **Jesus Comes for Sinners**

#### **Read Mark 2:13-17**

Jesus' call of Levi would have been shocking. As a tax collector, he represented greed, betrayal, and oppression to the people around him. Yet Jesus calls him to follow, eats with his friends, and explains that this is exactly why He came: sick people need a physician, and sinners need Him.

- What surprises you most about Jesus' interaction with Levi and the other people around the table?
- Are there types of people we are tempted to think are too far gone, too offensive, or too undeserving for Jesus? How does this passage challenge that way of thinking?

### **Jesus Didn't Come to Patch Us Up**

#### **Read Mark 2:18-22**

Jesus describes Himself as the bridegroom and then talks about new cloth and new wine. Both sermons emphasized that Jesus hasn't come simply to make us become more religious. The answer to our brokenness isn't merely a better set of behaviors; it's Jesus Himself, bringing forgiveness and an entirely new way of life.

- What do these illustrations imply about what it will look like to follow Jesus and live in His Kingdom?
- Where has Jesus already significantly changed the way you think, live, spend, relate, forgive, rest, or make decisions? Where are you most tempted to keep Him in an "old wineskin" where you want Jesus without allowing Him to change how you think or live?

### **A Gift, Not a Prison**

#### **Read Mark 2:23-28**

The Pharisees criticize Jesus' disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath. The Pharisees had turned the Sabbath from being the gift it was intended to be into another way of boasting in self-righteousness. Jesus directs them away from trusting their performance and toward trusting Him.

- How can something good (rules, traditions, spiritual disciplines, even biblical commands) become distorted when our focus shifts away from God?
- Where are Christians tempted to measure spiritual maturity mostly by outward behaviors rather than a heart that loves and trusts Jesus?

### **Stretch Out Your Hand**

#### **Read Mark 3:1-6**

Jesus meets a man whose hand cannot function and commands him to stretch it out. The request sounds impossible, yet the man trusts Jesus and obeys. At the same time, the Pharisees see Jesus' compassion and power firsthand but become even harder toward Him. Together, all these scenes show us a Physician who is both completely able and completely good, and force us to decide whether we will trust Him.

- What does this scene reveal about both the power and the character of Jesus?
- Jesus told Levi, "Follow me," and told this man, "Stretch out your hand." What is one clear step of trust or obedience Jesus may be asking you to take right now that feels difficult or even impossible?

### **Follow the Physician**

Jesus' invitation at the beginning of these stories is also the invitation underneath everything that follows: "Follow me." Jesus doesn't just diagnose our sin or give us better rules to manage it. Through His death and resurrection, He does for us what we could never do for ourselves, and then calls us away from the old life into a new life with Him.

- Why is "follow Jesus" fundamentally different from simply "try harder to become a better person"?
- When you look at who Jesus reveals Himself to be throughout these passages, what gives you the greatest confidence to trust and follow Him?

### GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

- **Outward Action:** Reach out to someone this week who may seem far from God or difficult to love, and show them some of the grace Jesus has shown you.
  - **Inward Prayer:** Ask God, “Where am I trying to patch up my old life instead of fully following You?” Ask Him to help you take one concrete step of trust and obedience.
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### PRAYER PROMPTS

*[Feel free to have yourself or someone else in the group just pray to end the time. However, these prompts are provided if some guidance is helpful]*

- Thank Jesus for moving toward sinners and offering the forgiveness we cannot earn ourselves.
  - Confess self-righteousness, hard-heartedness, or places where we look down on people Jesus loves.
  - Ask God to reveal any “old wineskins” we are still trying to hold onto.
  - Pray for faith to trust Jesus' authority and His goodness.
  - Ask for courage to take whatever clear next step of obedience He is calling us toward.
  - Pray for people in our lives who have not yet responded to Jesus' invitation to follow Him.
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**NEXT WEEK'S TEXT: Mark 3:7-35**