

4. NOTES FOR LEADERS.

The Mark passage describes this as a call to Levi whereas the parallel in Matthew 9.9 describes it as a call to Matthew. There is no Levi in the lists of disciples and we can assume that Levi and Matthew are the same person. Mark describes Levi as a tax collector, Matthew describes him as one who sitting at the tax booth. He was probably a toll tax collector stationed in busy Capernaum. We can assume that he was collecting for Herod rather than the Roman Government. Very little is known about Matthew as a person apart from the possibility of him being the author of the first Gospel and being included in the list of disciples.

1.
 - a. Who would be the closest friend that you have who is not a Christian?
 - b. What do they think of your faith and your involvement in the church?
 - c. What is their image of the church and of Jesus?
2. **See Luke 5.29**
What does it tell us about Levi and his understanding of Jesus that he invited his friends to meet Jesus?
3. **See Mark 2:13-17**
This is the fourth incident in Mark's Gospel that we have studied. Read back through Mark 1:16-20, 40-45 and 2:1-13. Do you see a common thread? (Look hard.)

The common thread mentioned in the sermon that each story in different ways underlines the popularity of Jesus. The fisherman followed. The leper came running to Jesus. The crowd surrounded the house. Levi obeyed and then introduced Jesus to his friends. If the group has more than 6-8 people you may divide them into pairs and give them one of the passages each and ask "What attitudes to Jesus are reflected in your passage. Is there evidence of popularity?"

4.
 - a. How would the world of the fishermen, the leper and the paralytic have been different after their encounter with Christ?
 - b. What would have been the values of Levi before he met Christ?
 - c. How would the world of Levi have been different (never the same) after he obeyed the call to follow Christ?
 - d. Would he still have had any struggles?
 - e. Did you, or are you still having any struggles regarding following Christ?
 - f. Does the 'old world' ever 'pop up to say hello' now and then?

Read through the sermon for some possible insights into how the values under which Levi would have lived would have been reversed under the leadership/ teaching/ example of Christ. The main one is the transition from dishonest collecting to giving to others.

5. **See Mark 2:16.** (Another criticism by the Pharisees!)
 - a. What deeply held value would Jesus have been threatening?
 - b. What do you think of the reply of Jesus?
 - c. How should this reply impact on what we do as a church?

Pharisees believed holiness could be preserved by apartheid. Table fellowship with sinners was the greatest threat to personal purity. It was not only the sinful and dishonest ways of the tax collectors that was a worry. It was also that they mixed with foreigners, handled foreign money (which often carried pagan symbols) but they also worked for a hated regime (either the Romans or Herod).

6. a. How can the Church be “a church that anyone can come to” and also hold true to its values regarding addiction, marriage, respect for property, loving others, etc? Isn’t there a danger that a Church’s morality could be compromised if too many took that slogan seriously?
b. Are there any in the group who started their Christian journey because this or some other church was a church that anyone could come to?
7. What does this story and those in Mark 1:23, 1:40ff, 5:1 ff, 5:25ff, 7:24ff, 9:14ff have in common?

The common thread is that, rather like the emphasis in Luke’s gospel, each of these stories deals with people who would have been marginalised for different reasons.

8. **See Mark 2:15.**

If you were describing Jesus in the stories we have studied so far, how would you present him in the calling of the fisherman, the healing of the leper, the healing of the paralyzed man and in this verse also?

The group may talk about the strong Christ who could call fishermen, the look of compassion with the leper, his determination when he healed the paralyzed and this picture here of the laughing Jesus.

9. There were three people in the story, Jesus, the Pharisees and Levi. Can you see why this was a conflict waiting to happen? Which character are you most like?

Levi would have felt there was nothing wrong with the company he kept. Jesus would have encouraged him to keep his friends but not to allow them to set the agendas for his values and morals. To the Pharisees Levi would have been a threat to the holiness of the law and Jesus’s involvement with him and his friends would have been just as bad.

10. a. Are there ways that the story challenges your Christianity?
b. Is there a “must do” aspect that comes out of this passage?