



OASIS: SHARE FRIENDSHIP
DONE IN SYNC WITH
OUR “SHARE THIS” SERIES
The Passage – Mark 2:13-17

***Preface:** Welcome to our LC Bible study in our sermon series “Share This: Encountering Jesus Encountering Others.” These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation).*

Study’s BIG Idea: Jesus offers his friendship to the least likely of people. Upon receiving Jesus’ friendship, Levi enters into a new life—and is given a new name.

Mark 2:13-17

Jesus Calls Levi and Eats With Sinners

13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.

14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

O – What do you notice about the setting and the chronology of the calling of Levi/Matthew?
(*Jesus first draws the large crowd, then begins teaching, presumably about the themes of his ministry, grace, forgiveness and love and then calls Levi—in front of all of them.*)

I – Tax collectors like Levi were seen as the ultimate traitors in Jesus’ day. Not only were they employed (and therefore protected) by their enemies, the Romans, but they would unfairly collect more than was required, thereby keeping the rest and stealing from their own people. Today we would see this as a form of embezzlement. How would you interpret the modern day equivalent of “tax collectors and sinners?”

A – How we can offer Christ’s redemption and love to the “tax collectors” of today?

O – Where is Jesus eating in verse 15 and how do the religious leaders respond?

I – The natural tendency is to distance ourselves from anyone of “shady character,” lest we be found “guilty by association.” Jesus seemed to do the opposite. Why is Jesus so intentional and so public about being seen with the most corrupt and with the least desirable of society?
(Jesus comes to turn everything upside down. Among his biggest messages is that no one is beyond God’s forgiveness, grace and redemption.)

A – Imagine Jesus’ ministry in today’s culture with our paparazzi, social media, and cable news networks that thrive on scandals. If you were hired to be part of Jesus’ public relations team, whom would you advise him not to be photographed with and where would you advise him not to be video-recorded?

O – What is Jesus’ response upon hearing the religious leaders’ question?

I – “It is not the healthy that need a doctor but the sick.” How do you think the Pharisees took that? What does it mean to you?

I – Later Levi’s name is changed to Matthew—what are the possible reasons?
(In the ancient world, name changes were frequently given during a great turning point in life. In the New Testament, Simon & Peter, Saul & Paul, etc. In this case, two reasons are likely. One is to symbolize a new start in life. The second is perhaps in the meanings of the names themselves. Levi meant “governor” or “ruler.” Furthermore, the Jewish world would remember the Levites were the priestly tribe of Israel—this name carries status. The name Matthew means “the gift of God.” This is interesting as Matthew goes from a life of stealing and taking to now giving and sharing the message of God.)

A – What does your birth name mean? It is not typical that we change our first names today but if you did, what would you change it to and why?

Key: O – Observation. I – Interpretation. A – Application

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.