

Date : 22 June 2025
Theme : Book of Mark - Servanthood.
Title : Following Jesus to call sinners to repentance
Passage : Mark 2:1-17
Key verse : Mark 2:17 – “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Introduction

Jesus' purpose and mission is to preach the good news and to call sinners. What does it mean to call sinners? It is to call sinners to repentance and to follow Him (Luke 5:27,32).

To follow Him is not simply tagging along and be a spectator, but to follow Him and call sinners to repentance, who will also call other sinners to repentance.

Since the beginning of Mark 1, He had called fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James and John) to follow him and become fishers of men. Jesus called them and taught them to call others. It is through this movement that Christianity has grown to be the world largest religion in the world. Yet there are still 70% of the world population who are yet to be saved. In Singapore, 4 out of 5 persons are unsaved and will continue to be unsaved if followers of Jesus wait passively and not take the action to call them and extend the invitation of the gospel to them.

How Jesus called sinners to repentance.

1. How Jesus called the Paralytic.

- a. Paralytics represent those who are helpless and is highly dependent on others to help them. They cannot do or produce much work, and do not see much value in themselves. Because of that they are usually excluded or neglected, may have a negative outlook and bear resentment toward others and even themselves. They can be the poor, the sick, having difficult family background, or others.

- b. **Jesus valued the Paralytic highly and called him affectionately as “son”. v5**

- Jesus affirmed him as God's beloved son; not as abandoned orphan.
- Humans are highly valued firstly because we are made in the image of God which reflects His righteous character and glory.
- Secondly, our value is determined by how much others are willing to pay for us. Our value is infinitely great for we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus.

- **Application:** See every person as highly valued by the Lord and call those who are the outcast.

c. Jesus forgave the Paralytic. v5

- Sin is the cause of curse and sickness, and is the barrier for healing (Deuteronomy 11:28). Fundamentally, our sin is the cause of offence and broken relationship with God (Isaiah 59:2).
- Therefore only God can forgive our sins and Jesus proved that He has the authority to forgive by demonstrating he has the authority to heal the paralytic – only God could heal the paralytic. v10
- No one is beyond forgiveness if one repents. Paul said that he was the chief of sinners, who directly opposed and persecuted Jesus by killing His followers, yet the Lord graciously forgave him. (1 Timothy 1:13) God's grace is greater than the greatest sin (Romans 5:20)

□ **Application:** Recognize that Christians have the only solution that everyone needs – all have sinned and need forgiveness. So we call everyone even if they may seem well on the outside.

d. Faith matters to God. v5

- The paralytic only responded by faith at the end. But it was his 4 friends' faith that brought down the grace of forgiveness.

□ **Application:** Even when our invitees lack faith, our faith can make the difference.

- The 4 friends' going out faith and going on faith helped the paralytic to have going in faith.

□ **Application:** When we initiate going out faith, it attracts God's attention & grace to help our invitees to exercise going in faith.

e. Outcome: God is glorified v12

- Healing took place and the people praised the Lord.
- It is by our works of faith to invite the Lord to intervene where man cannot solve, so God will be glorified through us. (Matthew 5:16)

2. How Jesus called Levi, the tax collector and his colleagues. v15

a. Jesus was passing by Levi's office and invited him to follow. v14

- It wasn't on purpose that Jesus looked for Levi. Jesus was just walking along, saw Levi, and called him to follow.

□ **Application:** Have a habit of calling people in the course of our life as we pass by different people.

b. Jesus saw Levi as a sinner who needed the Saviour. v14,17

- Other people saw Levi as sinner that should be shunned (v16). Because Levi was working for the enemy as a tax collector and got rich at the expense of his fellow men. Tax collectors are classified as sinners, together with prostitutes, swindlers, people of shady background and of bad character.

- Jesus saw the same sinner, but sinner who that needed to be saved. The Lord desires that none should perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

□ **Application:** See non-Christians as people who need Jesus and be saved, than to be avoided and condemned.

c. Jesus called Levi to follow him.

- If Jesus had not called Levi, Levi would have remained a sinful tax collector who was despised by others and continued in the destructive pattern of serving money as his master.
- Because Jesus called Levi, Levi was given the invitation and opportunity to follow Jesus as His new master, and abandoned all his sinful past and gains.
- Levi became one of Jesus' 12 reliable men who wrote the gospel of Matthew, impacting the world. Levi's transformation is a powerful reminder that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace and love.

□ **Application:** Have a habit of calling people to church. Without an invitation most would not come to church.

d. Levi called his ex-colleagues and friends to his home. v15

- Levi was just a new Christian but he was able to invite many of his ex-colleagues and friends to his home, serving them and meeting with Jesus.

□ **Application:** Regardless how young or old a Christian we are, we can invite our friends to our home for Alpha, where we show hospitality to them and give them an opportunity to know Jesus.

e. Jesus and his followers associated with the "sinners". v15

- Jesus' purpose of coming to earth is for sinners (v17). It is to have a relationship with them and reconcile them with God.
- Eating with someone is a sign of friendship and acceptance. People would not have responded to the gospel if they dislike us or they know that we dislike them.
- Connecting with non-Christians over food and fun, creates a non-threatening environment where Christians and non-Christians can gather and breakdown some of the barriers non-Christians may have toward Christians & vice versa.

□ **Application:** Have a habit of taking time to eat, talk and have fun with non-Christians. Organize fun activities as a cell and invite non-Christians to come and mingle.

Small group discussion

1. Discuss about the above applications and how we can start changing and calling people this week.