

## Small Groups @ TBC - Sermon Discussion Notes

**Date of Sermon:** 4 February 2018  
**Speaker:** Mike Levy  
**Title:** When Jesus meets Levi  
**Read:** Mark 2 verses 13 - 17

### Introduction:

As well as being a Community Service this was also a Baptism service, so the short talk was tailored with these in mind.

### What is Jesus up to?

In this passage, and throughout Mark 2 there is more beneath the surface than a simple encounter and Jesus says and does some outrageous things when compared with the norms of the time and in the eyes of the guardians of the Jewish faith. Initially it begs the question of his listeners "what right does this man have to say and do the things he says and does?", and then, for many, the penny drops. If this man is who he appears to be then he has every right.

### Levi

Levi was a Jew collecting taxes on behalf of the Roman oppressors and skimming off the top for himself. His toll booth was set up on a major international road between Damascus and the Mediterranean Sea, think putting a toll booth on the M4 just by Swindon. He was probably one of the highest earning tax collectors of his time. He was shunned from society and lived life on the edges, so his dinner guests were probably thieves, adulterers, prostitutes and the like. A shunned man among the shunned.

### Who did Jesus come for?

For Jesus to notice Levi was bad enough in some eyes, to call out and ask him to follow him was worse, to go and have a meal at Levi's home was just too much for the religious leaders to bear so they ask a question to which Jesus responds by saying *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners"*.

Really? Don't we believe that Jesus came for all, paid the price for all, so what does Jesus mean? He was making the point that those who count themselves righteous - already right with God - will not see their need to follow Jesus, they think they are Okay, do need to say sorry, no need to turn their life around. But everyone else, they will see what is missing from their life and see their need of Jesus.

Jesus came for everyone, but we need to know we are broken and need him. We don't need to be perfect to follow Jesus, in fact thinking that we are perfect just gets in the way of knowing him.

### What of Levi?

When Jesus said, *"Follow me"* he didn't mean for Levi to simply hang out with Jesus, he meant "give up your way of thinking, living and doing and pursue a new life obeying Jesus". So, Levi gave up his wealthy life as tax collector and became a disciple of Jesus, he changed his name to Matthew and became such a close follower of Jesus that he wrote the gospel that bears his name and which, in turn, helps others to follow Jesus.

## Reflection

1. Some of those who heard Jesus wondered what "right" he had to say and do the things he did; do we have a "right" to share the good news of Jesus? Do people have the "right" to hear?
2. Jesus upset the religious leaders, should we be prepared for people to be upset when we talk about Jesus and what he means to us? How do we react when people get upset?
3. What words of Jesus have most challenged your way of thinking and the life you lead? What difference have they made to the way you live your life?
4. Jesus reached out to those on the margins of society, how well do we reach out to those who are on the margins of our society? Are there any groups of people that you find it hard to reach out to?
5. It seems as if Levi had no hesitation in following Jesus, he dropped everything and followed him, how much do we hesitate?
6. Levi completely turned his life around, share your stories of how you have turned your life around for Jesus.
7. Baptism is a marker of faith where we show that we are followers of Jesus, Jesus was Baptised, Jesus told his followers to make disciples of all nations and baptize them, and the early church practiced believer's baptism:
  - a. Share stories of you own Baptism, what does it mean to you today?
  - b. Share your thoughts about the possibility of being Baptised?