

Mark 2: 13-17

13 Jesus went out again beside the lake; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. <sup>14</sup>As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

15 And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax-collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup>When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax-collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' <sup>17</sup>When Jesus heard this, he said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

**Commentary:** The Pharisees live in a black and white world. There are good people and there are bad people, and they know in which group they belong. Their pride, self-righteousness, and judgementalism is an obstacle to their openness to see God in Jesus' words and actions. Jesus declares that he has come to call not 'those who are well' but 'those who are sick... not the righteous but sinners.' Only those who know they are sick and need the divine physician will benefit from a divine kind of healing.

In this time of covid-19, when restrictions are getting more severe as the numbers of infected are still on the rise, there is a lot of judgement on those who somehow don't abide sufficiently well with the restrictions. Whether on social media or in other ways, we deal with our stress and fear by externalizing judgement on others who are not following the rules strictly enough. Our world becomes ever more black and white (Pharisaical), and our compassion is reserved for those few whom we deem innocent victims. This is not helping us (even if there's truth to the fact that everyone isn't abiding by the rules strictly enough). We need the energy of forgiving compassion that much more in us and around us. That's the best way to deal with and heal fear and stress.

**Questions:** Are you prepared to admit that you are sick or are you too proud? Do you comfort yourself morally by looking at the failings of others? The love of God cannot penetrate you if you cannot repent from the bottom of your heart and come to God on your knees (in humility, recognizing your need).

**Prayer:** Lord God, it is difficult for me to admit that I am sick in some ways, that I have judgement, failure and inadequacy in my life as much as these are part of the lives of others. Help me to see myself more truthfully so that your healing presence can move through me more fully; Amen.