

NO PERFECT PEOPLE ALLOWED - WEEK 1

The Call of Levi

Icebreaker

What's a place where you immediately feel like you belong, even if you haven't been there in a while?

Overview

Read **Mark 2:13-17**. Jesus is surrounded by a crowd, but He notices one person inside it: Levi, a tax collector. Jesus calls him to follow, then ends up at Levi's table surrounded by people the religious leaders considered unworthy.

Jesus doesn't wait for imperfect people to clean themselves up before He moves toward them. He meets them where they are and invites them to follow Him.

1. Jesus Loves a Crowd

Read Mark 2:13, Mark 1:45, and Matthew 9:36.

Crowds repeatedly gathered around Jesus. While some religious leaders looked down on the crowd, Jesus looked at people with compassion.

LOOK AT IT

- What do these passages tell us about the kinds of people who were drawn to Jesus?
- According to Matthew 9:36, what did Jesus feel when He looked at the crowds?

EXPLORE IT

- Why do you think imperfect, hurting, and spiritually confused people felt comfortable moving toward Jesus?
- What can cause churches or Christians to see a crowd differently than Jesus does?

GO DO IT

- What would it look like for you to see the people around you with compassion instead of assumptions?

2. Jesus Sees You in the Crowd

Read Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:28.

In the middle of the crowd, Jesus sees Levi sitting at his tax booth. Levi was not invisible to Jesus, and his past did not disqualify him from an invitation to follow.

LOOK AT IT

- What does Jesus say to Levi? How does Levi respond?
- What does Luke add about what Levi leaves behind?

EXPLORE IT

- What does it tell you about Jesus that He personally notices and calls someone like Levi?
- Where are people tempted to believe they need to become “better” before Jesus would want them?

GO DO IT

- Where do you most need to hear Jesus' invitation as personal: **“Follow me”**?
- Is there anything keeping you from responding to Jesus because you think you need to fix yourself first?

3. Jesus Pulls Up a Chair

Read Mark 2:15-17.

Jesus does not keep His distance from Levi's friends. He sits at their table. When the Pharisees criticize Him, Jesus explains His mission: healthy people do not need a doctor - sick people do.

LOOK AT IT

- Who is gathered around Levi's table with Jesus?
- What bothers the Pharisees about Jesus' choice of company?
- How does Jesus explain why He is there?

EXPLORE IT

- Why is knowing that you need help actually an advantage when it comes to receiving Jesus?
- What's the difference between Jesus accepting imperfect people and Jesus leaving people unchanged?

GO DO IT

- Do you find it easier to identify with the people at Levi's table or the people criticizing the table? Why?
- Who might Jesus be inviting you to make room for at your table?

Now What?

RECEIVE IT: Where do I need to believe that Jesus sees me and still invites me to follow? _____

FOLLOW: What is one step Jesus may be asking me to take?

MAKE ROOM: Who around me needs to experience the kind of welcome Jesus gave Levi? _____

You do not have to pretend to be healthy to come to the Doctor. Jesus came for people who know they need Him.

Group Prayer

Thank Jesus for moving toward imperfect people. Ask Him to help you receive His grace personally, follow Him honestly, and see the people around you with His compassion.

On Your Own

- **Day 1 - Mark 2:13-17:** Read the story again and notice every action Jesus takes toward Levi and his friends.
- **Day 2 - Matthew 9:35-38:** Ask God to help you see people with Jesus' compassion.
- **Day 3 - Luke 5:27-32:** Consider what Levi's response teaches you about following Jesus.
- **Day 4 - Matthew 10:1-4:** Notice who Matthew becomes after Jesus calls him.