

Date: March 29, 2026
Series: Mark: The Sovereign, Suffering Servant
Title: Beautiful, Scandalous Grace
Text: Mark 2:13-22



INTRODUCTION

*"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"
(Mark 11:9-10)*

Note: At some point—probably due to Jesus' decision to rename him—Levi's name was changed to "Matthew," which means "Gift of God."

I. BEAUTIFUL, SCANDALOUS GRACE

Mark 2:13-14 -

1) Jesus called one of the most hated/despised men in Capernaum to be His disciple. And Levi stood up, walked away from a very lucrative job, and followed Jesus!

Note: It appears that Levi was a low-level tax collector. He was not a chief tax collector (like Zacchaeus in Luke 19), but rather a "boots on the ground" tax collector who personally ensured the money was taken and collected.

Note: With finality, Levi is leaving his old life!

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (1 Timothy 6:10)

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." (1 Peter 4:8-9)

Mark 2:15-17 -

2) Those who are thought to be the worst sinners, the “sickest” of all people, are finding life, joy, hope, forgiveness, and fellowship in Jesus!

“What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (Mark 7:20-23)

Note: The sad irony of self-righteousness is that it condemns true righteousness and it blinds us to our true spiritual need!

Note: The most destructive, anti-grace thing we can say is: “I will come to Jesus when...”

*“...but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
(Romans 5:8)*

Note: Levi's transformation led immediately to celebration and invitation!

“It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.” (Luke 15:32)

Note: We will always hate and despise God's grace until we see how badly we need it.

Mark 2:18-22 -

3) In these few short verses, Jesus explains His identity, foreshadows His coming death, and illustrates the unique and exclusive glory of His transforming grace!

Questions for Further Study, Reflection, and Application...

1. What does the name Matthew mean?
2. Who was Levi/Matthew? Why was it such a scandalous thing for Jesus to call Him to be a disciple?
3. Why did Jesus agree to meet and eat with Levi's friends, with sinners and tax collectors?
4. How did Jesus explain His actions to the Pharisees? What point was Jesus making to them?
5. This week, who can you pray for and talk with about the transforming grace of Jesus?