

Sharing God's Hospitality

Key Verse: “*When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*”
—Mark 2:17

Selected Scripture:
Mark 2:13-17

some time in the area of Capernaum, Jesus went forth again walking by the Sea of Galilee, sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias. His many followers grouped around him to listen as he continued teaching the message to the people with a hearing ear. As he passed by a tax collector's office he saw Levi, one of a class despised by the Jews because they were expected to extract as much from them as they could possibly impose. Jesus said unto him, “Follow me,” (The Book of Matthew refers to Levi as Matthew). Although Levi was hardly yet aware of the responsibility of his future side-by-side walk as a believer in the Lord, he was moved to promptly obey, and arose from the tax office and followed him.—Mark 2:14

Having discovered Jesus for himself, Levi wished his friends to share his great discovery and perhaps also at the same time, bid farewell to his friends. Levi left all to follow Jesus and he made him a great feast in his own house. There was a great company of publicans and of

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others generally classified as sinners and outcasts of society that sat down with them, a crowd that seemed to be made up of many not welcome in the synagogue. (Mark 2:15; Matt. 9:10) By his actions in attending Levi's dinner party, Jesus took a bold step, offending the most conscientious followers of the Law; and the scribes and Pharisees murmured against Jesus' disciples who were present saying, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" (Mark 2:16) Jesus answering them said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (vs. 17) One of the major themes running through the gospels is that of God's hospitality.

In a later incident, we read how all the publicans and sinners drew near to hear him. "The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. . . . Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—Luke 15:1-10

Sharing God's hospitality means that we should exercise this loving quality toward others. As Peter said, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."—I Pet. 4:9,10 ■