

What Was He Thinking? Mark 2:13-17

The original question: “Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

“What was Jesus thinking?”

If you were asked this question, how would you answer?

What do disciples know about how Jesus thinks?

“All the things that you want other people to do for you, that also do for them.” (Matthew 7:12)

Proactive and not reactive. (The structure of this sentence often gets lost in translation.)

This is a way of thinking which becomes a way of living.

How to think this way:

First order:

I want people to call me by name, therefore I will remember other people’s names.

I want people to be honest with me, therefore I will cultivate the virtue of honesty.

I don’t want people to tell me what to do, therefore I won’t tell them what to do.

Second order: I don’t want people doing things for me simply because it is what they think they should do, or because they think it is good for me, or even because it is what they would want me to do for them; I want them to ask me first, therefore I will ask them what they want me to do for them.

What might Jesus have been thinking when he ate with sinners?

First order: What are some things Jesus might have wanted others to do for him that he would then do for these “tax collectors and sinners”?

Second order: What might Jesus have been able to know about what these tax collectors and sinners wanted him to do for them?

The answer: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

Jesus answers a different question, “Why do tax collectors and sinners eat with you?”

Mark has hinted at this answer in verse 15 by making them the subjects of that sentence, “... many tax collectors and sinner were also reclining at table with Jesus.”

Jesus doesn’t treat these people as objects but as fellow subjects with whom he interacts.

We are not told if Jesus the Physician healed anyone at Levi’s house or if he forgave any sinners.

The one thing Mark wants us to know is that these sinners and Jesus ate together.

Ask not: How *should* I treat other people?

Ask yourself, “What do I honestly want others to do for me?”

Ask others, “What do you want me to do for you?”