

Breaking All the Religious Rules

Mark 2:13-17

Ice Breaker: Describe a time when you broke a rule that you thought wasn't important enough to follow? What was the response of other people when you broke it?

Big Idea: The Pharisees could not believe that Jesus would eat with tax collectors and “sinners.” In their pursuit of holiness, the Pharisees lost sight of the fact that without God's mercy – they too were as hopelessly lost as the most notorious of sinners. They loved their rules and traditions more than lost people. Jesus came and blew their rules and traditions out of the water.

Digging Deeper:

- 1) Read Mark 2:13-14. How does Jesus' call of Levi compare to his calling of other disciples? What does this tell us about tax collectors – from Jesus' perspective?
- 2) Given what Pastor Joshua was explaining regarding how tax collectors were viewed in the 1st century – what would have been going on in your heart (if you were Levi) and Jesus had called you to become one of his disciples?
- 3) Read Mark 2:15-16. How do the Pharisees respond to Jesus eating with tax collectors and “sinners”? How do you think you would have responded to what Jesus is doing here – had you been a Bible-believing Jew in first century Palestine? Would you have been more comfortable with what Jesus was bringing or with the Pharisees' spirituality of religious rule-keeping? Why?
- 4) Read Mark 2:17. What is Jesus response to the Pharisees' question? What does this tell us about the mission of Jesus? What does this mean for those who think they are already in right-standing with God – because of their religious rule-keeping?
- 5) What religious rules or traditions of man – that aren't found in Scripture – are so important to you – that when they get broken or neglected or abandoned – you find yourself feeling hurt, angry, resentful, and tempted to go to another church? If Jesus asked you to abandon these “traditions of men” – would you?
- 6) Spend some time praying that we as a church would follow Jesus wherever He leads us – regardless of what that means for our religious rules and traditions of men – and that we might become more focused on living out God's heart for lost people.