

One Body Initiative – The Call of Levi

Week 4

September 28, 2020

Scripture: Mark 2:13-17

“Once again Jesus went out along the sea. All the crowd came to him and he taught them. As he passed by, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners sat with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. Some scribes who were Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors and said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus heard this and said to them [that], “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

Commentary:

The commentaries offer a place for an intellectual understanding of the text and material presented.

Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Mark; John Donahue, SJ and Daniel J. Harrington, SJ

Jesus is the “Son of Man” who has the authority to forgive sins. But this authority and power are manifest when a “sinner” who is a toll collector follows him and when he joins in table fellowship with many toll collectors and sinners who, like Levi, follow him. Forgiveness is not merely an external or juridical pronouncement but a new relationship and a new community, the community of sinners who yet are followers of Jesus. (page 104)

These narratives provide a continuing challenge to Christian churches. Every denomination has both an ethic and an ethos, that is, accepted ways of behavior that embody a life in fidelity to the biblical vision. Though sinners, Christians strive to live justly in their relations to God and neighbor. Yet the practice of Jesus depicted here manifests a preference for the marginal. Churches today are challenged to expend their energy and resources not only on the “well” and the strong but also (and especially) on those who need healing and a sense of divine acceptance. (pages 104-105)¹

¹ Donahue, John and Daniel J. Harrington, *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 2002) p. 104-105.

The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Mark by Philip A Van Linden, C.M.

In Genesis, because God had “named” the heavens and the earth and all creatures, they became God’s possession. When God gave Adam the command to name the animals, Adam shared God’s own power over them. To be “named” by Jesus means to be possessed by him, to be under his control. It also means that those named by him will share in his power. (page 912)²

Questions for Reflection:

- What is your understanding of vocation?
- How have you experienced God’s call in your own life?
- Where have you struggled in understanding what God is calling you to? How have you worked through those struggles? What still remains?
- Who are some of your role models when it comes to understanding your own vocation? What impact have they had on your life?
- What do you need to do to continue discerning / living your vocation?

² Bergant, Dianne and Robert J. Karris, *The Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1989) p. 912.