

Mark 2:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

Analysis

This verse depicts Jesus' fellowship with 'publicans and sinners'—a scandalous association that violated religious propriety. 'Many publicans and sinners sat together with Jesus and his disciples' emphasizes shared table fellowship (*συνανέκειντο*, *synanekeinto*), indicating intimate social communion. In Jewish culture, shared meals signified acceptance and friendship; to eat with someone was to endorse them. Jesus' willing association with moral and social outcasts demonstrates His mission to 'seek and save the lost' (Luke 19:10). The phrase 'for there were many, and they followed him' indicates that outcasts comprised a significant portion of Jesus' followers. Reformed theology emphasizes that Christ came to call sinners, not the righteous—His mission is redemptive, not restrictive.

Historical Context

Tax collectors (publicans) were despised as traitors collaborating with Rome's occupation and extorting fellow Jews. They collected tolls, customs, and taxes, often demanding bribes and excess payments. Jewish religious law considered them ceremonially unclean. 'Sinners' (*ἀμαρτωλοί*) likely refers to those notorious for immoral lifestyles—prostitutes, adulterers, Gentiles, and those in 'unclean' occupations. Pharisaic Judaism emphasized separation from such individuals. Jesus' table fellowship was revolutionary and offensive, challenging purity-based social boundaries.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' association with notorious sinners challenge your comfort zones in relationships and evangelism?
2. In what ways do churches create barriers that keep 'publicans and sinners' away from Jesus rather than welcoming them?
3. Who are the modern 'publicans and sinners' you avoid, and how might Jesus be calling you to extend grace?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐγενέτο ἐν τῷ κατακεῖσθαι αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ
And it came to pass in sat at meat as Jesus in house
G2532 G1096 G3588 G2621 G846 G1722 G3588 G3614

αὐτῷ καὶ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἀμαρτωλοὶ συνανέκειντο
as Jesus And many publicans And sinners sat
G846 G2532 G4183 G5057 G2532 G268 G4873

τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτῷ ἦσαν γὰρ πολλοὶ
Jesus And G3588 disciples as Jesus there were for many
G2424 G2532 G3101 G846 G2258 G1063 G4183

καὶ ἤκολούθησαν αὐτῷ
And they followed as Jesus
G2532 G190 G846

Additional Cross-References

Luke 15:1 (Sin): Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

