

Sermon Title: **Why Does He Eat With ... ?**

Bible: **Mark 2:13-20**

Where & When: Sunday at Gilroy UMC on Feb. 23, 2020

Audience: about 34 English-speaking Church Members

### **Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, thank you so much for Jesus' life and ministry on the earth. We want to learn about Jesus' life and ministry. Please help us to follow Jesus. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **1. What Do You Expect at Church?**

What do you expect at church? When we come to church, what is our purpose? What made us keep coming to church? To me, the church is the place of healing and growth in God's love and grace. I am not perfect. I am weak and broken. Many times, I want to hide my weakness and brokenness. Sometimes, my weakness and brokenness hurts me as well as others. To show weakness and brokenness is not easy. Being vulnerable takes courage and love. In front of Jesus, I can be who I am, even with my weakness and brokenness. Jesus is the head of the church. I believe that the church is the place for healing and growth. Healing and growth is the way of Jesus.

### **2. E-Bible: Searching the Verb "Eat"**

Do you keep a journal? What did you do yesterday? If you keep a journal, what do you want to write down from yesterday? Many times, I want to remember and write down something special. Probably, I do not want to write about my ordinary life. The Bible has something kind of like journals about Jesus' life and ministry, which are the four Gospels. The four Gospels

contain many stories and sayings of Jesus. If we were the authors of the Gospels, which stories would we want to write down, miraculous stories or ordinary stories? What did Jesus do? What ministry did Jesus do? The Gospels contain many awesome stories: Jesus heals the sick; Jesus feeds five thousand; Jesus casts out the demons; Jesus calms down the storm, and so on. But, very interestingly, the authors of the Gospels wrote down many stories of Jesus eating. Eating is basic and very ordinary in our life, but the Gospels have many stories of eating. It would be best to read the four Gospels in their entirety from cover to cover, in order to check this out.

However, we do not need to do it, now that we have not only the Bible in paper form, but also in e-book form, the electronic Bible. So, I can search the verbs related to eating. I searched the verb “eat” in the Gospel of Mark. How many chapters are there in the Gospel of Mark? The Gospel of Mark has 16 chapters. Then, can you guess how many times the verb “eat” is used in Mark? This includes other usages of the verb “eat” like “ate” or “eating.”

The verb “Eat” - 1.6; 2.16 (twice); 2.26 (twice); 3.20; 5.43; 6.31, 36, 37 (twice), 42, 44; 7.2, 3, 4, 5, 28; 8.1, 2, 8; 11.14; 14.12, 14, 18 (twice), 22.

The verb “eat” occurs 27 times only in the Gospel of Mark. This could mean that eating is not only basic and ordinary, but also important and meaningful in early Christianity.

### **3. Jesus’ Life and Ministry - Eating With Others**

In the Gospels, Jesus eats many times with many different people. As we read today’s Scripture, the scribes and the Pharisees--the religious leaders at that time--did not want Jesus to eat with tax collectors and sinners. They did not understand what Jesus was doing at the table.

On the other hand, many tax collectors and sinners were those who suffered with weakness and brokenness at that time. They could not dare to eat with others. However, our Lord, Jesus went to their houses, and sat at dinner, and ate with them together. How were they? In the Scripture that we read, there was no description of tax collectors' and sinners' perspectives. In my imagination, when Jesus said, "I have come to call not the righteous but the sinner, [the weak and the broken], I could see their tears and their healing at the table. When Jesus talked about the wedding and the bridegroom, I could see joy at the feast. Eating together is very ordinary, but it can be meaningful and powerful, when there is Jesus at the table, and when we come to the table, as we are, with our weakness and brokenness.

#### **4. My First Dinner Gathering in Gilroy UMC**

I still remember many dinner gatherings to get to know each other, right after I came to this church. Many church leaders opened their houses, welcomed me as a new pastor, and fed me. At that time, I was a little nervous for the dinner gatherings. To know new people is joyful, but not easy, as an introvert. When I went to the first dinner gathering, I rang the doorbell, and I got in the house. And then, I took off my shoes, as I do in Korea. In Korea, we take off our shoes at home. I assume that nobody noticed that. At that time, I smiled at myself and I thought that I was really nervous as a foreign and young pastor. I came back to the door and put my shoes on. For 9 years in the States, I have not made this mistake before. So, I just thought that I needed to relax and enjoy myself. However, while I was preparing my message, I changed my interpretation. My new interpretation is that I was welcomed to this church, just like my home.

That's why I took off my shoes unconsciously just as I do at my home. I discovered healing from my mistake. I am really thankful to have great church leaders and loving members. I know you already and still welcome me. So, please do not expect me to take my shoes off at your house. Please remember that I am grateful and joyful to serve you with my shoes on.

### **5. An Invitation to Centering Prayer with Soup Supper**

This coming Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, and 2020 Lent begins. What is your plan for Lent? On Fridays in Lent, there will be Centering Prayers with Soup Supper. At the beginning, I want us to focus on Jesus, God's presence with Centering prayer. Centering prayer is silent prayer. Usually it takes 20 minutes, but I will customize that to our congregation. 10 minutes of silent prayer sounds okay? And then, there will be a time to read and meditate on the Psalms together. At the end, we will eat together, just as Jesus did in today's scripture reading. I hope that there will be a healing to our weakness and brokenness, and joy at the table and our church. Please come; pray together, and eat together.

### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, thank you so much for your table fellowship. There is healing and joy. In the 2020 Lenten Season, we want to focus on you more and more. Please be with us in your healing and presence. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Questions.**

1. What is your plan for 2020 Lent?
2. When or where do you experience God's healing?